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THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD

H. P. LIDDON
D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.

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The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

EIGHT LECTURES PREACHED BEFORE
—— THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD ——
ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LATE JOHN BAMPTON, M.A.
CANON OF SALISBURY

BY
H. P. LIDDON
M.A., D.D., D.C.L., LL.D. Camb
Canon and Chancellor of St. Paul's, and
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Editor's Preface.

IN reducing so large a work to a small compass it has been necessary to sacrifice many pages of learned matter useful only to scholars.

The things that have been selected for deletion are chiefly :

1. The Footnotes (except necessary Scripture references)
2. The Notes at the end of the Volume.
3. Discussions that do not bear directly on the subject, such as of the Logos of Philo, the Authenticity of John's Gospel, and the whole of Lecture VII containing the History of the Homoousion, etc.
4. Those passages in which the Author confutes the sceptical writers of the nineteenth century, whose theories have been long since generally discredited.
5. The quotations from, and discussion of the opinions of the early fathers, except where they form part of the main argument.
6. The application of the subject to the distinctive doctrines of the Church of England

The deletion of these has enabled the Editor **to present the Lectures in the Author's own words without any essential truth or material argument being lost,** though often shortened.

He humbly acknowledges his indebtedness to the Author for spiritual help received from the Lectures, which has made the preparation of them in a shortened form, so that they may be within the reach of a wider circle of readers, a labour of love.

May the perusal of them help many readers to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ!

GEO. GOODMAN.

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P.S.—The Title "Divinity' is retained as in the original, but "Deity" is intended (see pages 21 and 22). The modern heresy as to the meaning of "Divinity" not having come to the front when the Lectures were given.

"**Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers**" (Titus 1. 9).

Uniform in size—The Bampton Lecture, 1864.

THE PROGRESS OF DOCTRINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Canon Bernard. Eight Lectures preached before the University of Oxford.

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THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD.

LECTURE I.

The Question Before Us.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16. 13-15).

THUS did our Lord propose to His first followers the momentous question which for eighteen centuries has riveted the eye of thinking and adoring Christendom. The Evangelist is careful to note that the question of our Lord was asked in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus Christ was standing on the geographical frontier of Judaism and Heathendom. Paganism was visibly before Him in its most typical forms of perpetual and world-wide degradation, and behind and around our Lord was that peculiar people of whom, as concerning the flesh, He came Himself, and to which His first followers belonged. May not then Cæsarea Philippi have been chosen by our Lord as well fitted to witness that solemn inquiry in the full answer to which Jew and Gentile were alike to find a rich inheritance of light, peace, and freedom? Jesus "asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

Let us pause to mark the significance of the fact that our Lord Himself proposes this consideration to His disciples and to His Church.

He drew the eyes of men towards Himself. He claimed to be something more than the Founder of a new religious spirit, or than the authoritative promulgator of a higher

truth than men had yet known. He taught true religion indeed as no man had yet taught it, but He bent the religious spirit which He had summoned into life to do homage to Himself, as being its lawful and adequate object. He taught the highest theology, but He also placed Himself at the very centre of His doctrine, and He announced Himself as sharing the very throne of that God whom He so clearly unveiled. If He was the organ and author of a new and final revelation, He also claimed to be the very substance and material of His own message; His most startling revelation was Himself.

The Example of John the Baptist.

But let us also ask ourselves what would be the duty of a merely human teacher of the highest moral aim entrusted with a great spiritual mission and lesson for the benefit of mankind? The example of John the Baptist is an answer to this inquiry. Such a teacher would represent himself as a mere "voice" crying aloud in the moral wilderness around him, and anxious, beyond aught else, to shroud his own insignificant person beneath the majesty of his message. Not to do this would be to proclaim his own moral degradation; it would be a public confession that he could only regard a great spiritual work for others as furnishing an opportunity for adding to his own social capital or to his official reputation. When then Jesus Christ so urgently draws the attention of men to His personal self, He places us in a dilemma. We must either say that He was unworthy of His own words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6. 1-8), or we must confess that He has some right, and is under the pressure of some necessity, to do that which would be morally insupportable in a merely human teacher. Now if this right and necessity exist, it follows that when our Lord bids us to consider His personal rank in the hierarchy of beings, He challenges an answer.

It may be urged that our Lord is inviting attention, not to His essential personality, but to His assumed office as the Jewish Messiah; that He is, in fact, asking for a confession of His Messiahship.

Now observe the exact form of our Lord's question, as given in Matthew's Gospel, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" This question involves an assertion, namely, that the Speaker is the Son of Man. What did He mean by that designation? It is important to remember that with two exceptions the title is only applied to our Lord in the New Testament by His own lips. It was His self-chosen Name: why did He choose it?

A Clear Assertion of Messiahship.

First, then, it was in itself, to Jewish ears, a clear assertion of Messiahship. In the vision of Daniel "One like unto the Son of Man (Dan. 7. 13) had come with the clouds of Heaven, . . . and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom." This kingdom succeeded in the prophet's vision to four inhuman kingdoms, correspondent to the four typical beasts; it was the kingdom of a prince, human indeed, and yet from Heaven. In consequence of this prophecy the "Son of Man" became a popular and official title of the Messiah. Our Lord, in His prophecy over Jerusalem, predicted that at the last day "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory" (Matt. 24. 30). And when standing at the tribunal of Caiaphas He thus addressed His judges: "I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. 26. 64). In these passages there is absolutely no room for doubting either His distinct reference to the vision in Daniel, or the claim which the title Son of Man was intended to assert. As habitually used by our Lord, it was a constant setting forth of His Messianic dignity in the face of the people of Israel.

Why indeed He chose this one, out of the many titles of Messiah, is a further question, a brief consideration of which lies in the track of the subject before us.

The Title Son of Man.

As it had been addressed to the prophet Ezekiel, the title Son of Man seemed to contrast the frail and short-lived life of men with the boundless strength and the

eternal years of the Infinite God. And as applied to Himself by Jesus, it doubtless expresses a real humanity, a perfect and penetrating community of nature and feeling with the lot of human kind. Thus, when our Lord says that authority was given Him to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man, it is plain that the point of the reason lies, not in His being Messiah, but in His being Human. He displays a genuine humanity which could deem nothing human strange, and could be touched with a feeling of the infirmities of the race which He was to judge. But the title Son of Man means more than this in its application to our Lord. It does not merely assert His real incorporation with our kind ; it exalts Him indefinitely above us all as the representative, the ideal, the pattern Man. He is, in a special sense, the Son of Mankind, the genuine offspring of the race. His is the Human Life which does justice to the idea of humanity. All human history tends to Him or radiates from Him. He is the point in which humanity finds its unity. This sense of the title seems to be implied in such passages as that in which He contrasts " the foxes which have holes, and the birds of the air which have nests," with " the Son of Man who hath not where to lay His head." It is not the official Messiah, as such ; but " the fairest among the children of men," the natural Prince and Leader, the very prime and flower of human kind, whose lot is thus harder than that of the lower creatures, and in whose humiliation humanity itself is humbled below the level of its natural dignity.

What is He Besides Being the Son of Man?

When then our Lord inquires, " Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am ? " He is not merely asking whether men admit what the title Son of Man itself imports ; that is to say, the truth of His humanity or the truth of His Messiahship. The point of His question is *this* : What is He besides being the Son of Man ? As the Son of Man He *is* Messiah ; but what is the personality which sustains the Messianic office ? As the Son of Man He *is* truly human ; but what is the Higher Nature with which this emphatic claim to humanity is in tacit but manifest

contrast ? What is He in the seat and root of His Being ? Is His Manhood a robe which He has thrown around a higher form of pre-existent life, or is it His all ? Has He been in existence some thirty years at most, or are the august proportions of His life only to be meted out by the days of eternity ? " Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am ? "

The disciples reply that at that time, in the public opinion of Galilee, our Lord was, at the least, a preternatural personage. On this point there was, it would seem, a general consent. The cry of a petty local envy which had been raised at Nazareth, " Is not this the carpenter's Son ? " did not fairly represent the matured or prevalent opinion of the people. The people did not suppose that Jesus was in truth merely one of themselves, only endued with larger powers and with a finer religious instinct. They thought that His personality reached back somehow into the past of their own wonderful history. They took Him for a saint of ancient days who had been reinvested with a bodily form. He was the great expected, miracle-working Elijah, or He was the disappointed prophet who had followed His country to its grave at the Captivity, or He was the recently-martyred preacher and ascetic John the Baptist, or He was, at any rate, one of the order which for four hundred years had been lost to Israel ; He was one of the prophets.

"Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Our Lord turns from these public misconceptions to the judgment of that little body which was already the nucleus of His future Church : " But whom say ye that I am ? " Peter replies, in the name of the other disciples, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." In marked contrast to the popular hesitation which refused to recognise explicitly the justice of the claim so plainly put forward by the assumption of the title " Son of Man," the Apostle confesses, " Thou art the Christ." But Peter advances a step beyond this confession, and replies to the original question of our Lord, when he adds, " The Son of the Living God."

The Great Question Then and Now.

LEAVING, however, a fuller discussion of the interpretation of this particular text, let us note that the question raised at Cæsarea Philippi is still the great question before the modern world. Whom do men say now that Jesus the Son of Man is ?

A QUESTION WHICH MUST BE FACED.

I. No serious and thoughtful man can treat such a subject with indifference. There is that in the form of the Son of Man which prevails to command something more than attention, even in an age so conspicuous for its boisterous self-assertion as our own, and in intellectual atmospheres as far as possible removed from the mind of His believing and adoring Church. Never since He ascended to His throne was He the object of a more passionate adoration than now ; never did He encounter the glare of hatred more intense and more defiant : and between these, the poles of a contemplation incessantly directed upon His Person, there are shades and levels of thought and feeling, many and graduated, here detracting from the highest expressions of faith, there shrinking from the most violent extremities of blasphemy.

Aye, though you salute your Saviour in Pilate's words, " Behold the Man ! " at least you cannot ignore Him ; you cannot resist the moral and intellectual forces which converge in our day with an ever-increasing intensity upon His Sacred Person ; you cannot turn a deaf ear to the question which He asks of His followers in each generation, and which He never asked more solemnly than now, " Whom say men that I the Son of Man am ? "

ONE OF THREE ANSWERS.

II. Now all serious Theists, who believe that God is a Personal Being essentially distinct from the work of His hands, must make one of three answers, whether in terms or in substance, to the question of the text.

The Ebionite and Socinian Answer.

1. The Ebionite of old, and the Socinian now, assert that Jesus Christ is merely man, whether (as Faustus Socinus himself teaches) supernaturally born of a virgin, or (as modern Rationalists generally maintain) in all respects subject to ordinary natural laws, although of such remarkable moral eminence that He may, in the enthusiastic language of ethical admiration, be said to be "Divine." And in modern days the phenomenon of practical Humanitarianism is reproduced in the case of such well-known writers as Schleiermacher or Ewald. They use language at times which seems to do the utmost justice to the truth of Christ's Divinity; they recognise in Him the perfect Revelation of God, the true Head and Lord of human kind; but they deny the existence of an immanent Trinity in the Godhead; they recognise in God no pre-existent personal form as the basis of His self-manifestation to man; they are really Monarchianists in the sense of Praxeas; and their keen appreciation of the ethical glory of Christ's Person cannot save them from consequences with which it is ultimately inconsistent, but which are on other grounds logically too inevitable to be permanently eluded. A Christ who is "the perfect Revelation of God," yet who "is not personally God," does not really differ from the altogether human Christ of Socinus; and the assertion of the personal Godhead of Christ can only escape from the profane absurdities of Patripassianism, when it presupposes the eternal and necessary existence in God of a threefold personality.

The Arian Answer.

2. The Arian maintains that our Lord Jesus Christ existed before His incarnation, that by Him, as by an instrument, the Supreme God made the worlds, and that, as being the most ancient and the highest of created beings, He is to be worshipped; that, however, Christ had a beginning of existence, that there was a time when He did not exist, that He has His subsistence from what once was not, and cannot therefore be called God in the sense in which that term is applied by Theists to the Supreme Being.

The "Whole Church" Answer.

3. In contrast with these two leading forms of heresy stands that which has ever been and is the faith of the whole Church of Christ: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, Being OF ONE SUBSTANCE WITH the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man."

Practically indeed these three answers may be still further reduced to two, the first and the third; for Arianism, no less than Sabellianism, is really a form of the humanitarian or naturalist reply to the question. The real question at issue is not merely whether Christ is only a man; it is whether or not He is only a created being. When the question is thus stated, Arianism must really take its place side by side with the most naked Deism; while at the same time it suggests, by its incarnation of a created Logos, the most difficult among the problems which meet a believer in the hypostatic union of our Lord's two natures. In order to escape from this position, it virtually teaches the existence of two Gods, each of whom is an object of worship, One of whom has been created by the Other; One of whom might, if He willed, annihilate the other. Thus in Arianism reason and faith are equally disappointed: the largest demands are made upon faith, yet the Arian Christ after all is but a fellow-creature; and reason is encouraged to assail the mysteries of the Catholic creed on behalf of a theory which admits of being reduced to an irrational absurdity.

TWO OBSERVATIONS.

III. Let us here pause to make two observations respecting that complete assertion of the Divinity of our Lord for which His Church is responsible at the bar of human opinion.

The Perfect Manhood of Christ.

1. The Catholic doctrine, then, of Christ's Divinity in no degree interferes with or overshadows the complemental truth of His perfect Manhood. We are told that the Eternal Word (John 1. 14), took human nature upon Him in its reality and completeness (John 8. 40; 1 Tim. 2. 5).

The great subject of the Gospel narratives has a true human body. He is conceived in the womb of a human mother. He is by her brought forth into the world; He is fed at her breast during infancy. As an Infant, He is made to undergo the painful rite of circumcision. He is a Babe in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. He is nursed in the arms of the aged Simeon. His bodily growth is traced up to His attaining the age of twelve, and from that point to manhood. His presence at the marriage feast in Cana, at the great entertainment in the house of Levi, and at the table of Simon the Pharisee; the supper which He shared at Bethany with the friend whom He had raised from the grave; the paschal festival which He desired so earnestly to eat before He suffered; the bread and fish of which He partook before the eyes of His disciples in the early dawn on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, even after His resurrection, are witnesses that He came, like one of ourselves, "eating and drinking." When He is recorded to have taken no food during the forty days of the Temptation, this implies the contrast presented by His ordinary habit. Indeed, He seemed to the men of His day much more dependent on the physical supports of life than the great ascetic who had preceded Him. He knew by experience what are the pangs of hunger; after the forty days' fast in the wilderness, and in a lesser degree, as may be supposed, when walking into Jerusalem on the Monday before His passion. The profound spiritual sense of His redemptive cry, "I thirst," uttered while He was hanging on the Cross, is not obscured when its primary literal meaning, that while dying He actually endured that wellnigh sharpest form of bodily suffering, is explicitly recognised. His deep sleep on the Sea of Galilee in a little bark which the waves

threatened momentarily to engulf, and His sitting down at the well of Jacob through great exhaustion produced by a long journey on foot from Judæa proved that He was subject at times to the depression of extreme fatigue. And, not to dwell at length upon those particular references to the several parts of His bodily frame which occur in Holy Scripture, it is obvious to note that the evangelical account of His physical sufferings, of His death, of His burial, and of the wounds in His hands and feet and side after His resurrection are so many emphatic attestations to the fact of His true and full participation in the material side of our common nature.

The True Human Soul of our Blessed Lord.

Equally explicit and vivid is the witness which Scripture affords to the true human soul of our blessed Lord. Its general movements are not less spontaneous, nor do its affections flow less freely, because no sinful impulse finds a place in it, and each pulse of its moral and mental life is in conscious harmony with and subjection to an all-holy will. Jesus rejoices in spirit on hearing of the spread of the Kingdom of Heaven among the simple and the poor ; He beholds the young ruler and forthwith loves him. He loves Martha and her sister and Lazarus with a common yet, as seems to be implied, with a discriminating affection. His eye on one occasion betrays a sudden movement of deliberate anger at the hardness of heart which could steel itself against truth by maintaining a dogged silence. The scattered and fainting multitude melts Him to compassion : He sheds tears of sorrow at the grave of Lazarus, and at the sight of the city which has rejected His love. In contemplating His approaching passion and the ingratitude of the traitor apostle His soul is shaken by a vehement agitation which He does not conceal from His disciples. In the Garden of Gethsemane He wills to enter into an agony of amazement and dejection. His mental sufferings are so keen and piercing that His tender frame gives way beneath the trial, and He sheds His blood before they nail Him to the Cross. His human will consciously submits itself to a Higher Will (Luke 22. 42), and He learns obedience by the

discipline of pain (Heb. 5. 8). He carries His dependence still further ; He is habitually subject to His parents, He recognises the fiscal regulations of a pagan state, He places Himself in the hands of His enemies, He is crucified through weakness. If an apostle teaches that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him, an evangelist records that He increases in wisdom as He increases in stature. Conformably with these representations we find Him as man expressing creaturely dependence upon God by prayer. He rises up a great while before day at Capernaum and departs into a solitary place that He may pass the hours in uninterrupted devotion. He makes intercession for His whole redeemed Church in the paschal supper room, He offers to Heaven strong crying with tears in Gethsemane, He asks pardon for His Jewish and Gentile murderers at the very moment of His crucifixion, He resigns His departing Spirit into His Father's hands.

"That Jesus Christ is Come in the Flesh."

Thus, as one apostle teaches, He took a body of flesh (Col. 1. 22), and His whole humanity both of soul and body shared in the sinless infirmities which belong to our common nature. To deny this fundamental truth, " that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," is, in the judgment of another apostle, the mark of the deceiver, the Antichrist (1 John 4. 2). Christ's manhood is not unreal because it is sinless, because the entail of any taint of transmitted sin is in Him cut off by a supernatural birth of a virgin mother.

This reality and perfection of our Lord's manhood has been not less jealously maintained by the Church than it is clearly asserted in the pages of Scripture. From the first the Church has taught that Jesus Christ is " Perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting." Nor did the Church in her collective capacity ever so insist on Christ's Godhead as to lose sight of the truth of His perfect manhood.

Nor is the manhood of our Saviour prized by the Church only as a revealed dogma intellectually essential to the formal integrity of the creed. Every believing Christian knows that it touches the very heart of his inner life. What

becomes of the one Mediator between God and man if the manhood whereby He places Himself in contact with us men is but unreal and fictitious? What becomes of His human example, of His genuine sympathy, of His agonising and world-redeeming death, of His plenary representation of our race in Heaven, of the "touch of nature" which makes Him, most holy as He is, in very deed kin with us? All is forthwith uncertain, evanescent, unreal. If Christ be not truly Man, the chasm which parted earth and Heaven has not been bridged over. God, as before the incarnation, is still awful, remote, inaccessible.

"God" in the Absolute Sense of the Word.

2. Let it be observed, on the other hand, that the Nicene assertion of our blessed Lord's Divinity does not involve any tacit mutilation or degradation of the idea conveyed by the sacred Name of God. When Jesus Christ is said by His Church to be God, that word is used in its natural, its absolute, its incommunicable sense. This must be constantly borne in mind if we would escape from equivocations which might again and again obscure the true point before us. For Arianism will confess Christ's Divinity if, when it terms Him God, it may really mean that He is only a being of an inferior and created nature. Socinianism will confess Christ's Divinity if this confession involves nothing more emphatic than an acknowledgement of the fact that certain moral features of God's character shone forth from the human life of Christ with an absolutely unrivalled splendour. Pantheism will confess Christ's Divinity, but then it is a Divinity which He must share with the universe. Christ may well be Divine when all is divine, although Pantheism, too, may admit that Christ is Divine in a higher sense than any other man because He has more clearly recognised or exhibited "the eternal oneness of the finite and the infinite, of God and humanity." The coarsest forms of unbelief will confess our Lord's Divinity if they may proceed to add, by way of explanation, that such language is but the echo of an apotheosis, informally decreed to the prophet of Nazareth by the fervid but uncritical enthusiasm of His Church.

Not the Divinity of Pantheism.

No, the Divinity of Jesus is not such divinity as Pantheism might ascribe to Him. In the belief of the Church Jesus stands alone among the sons of men as He of whom it can be said without impiety that He is not merely Divine, but God. Such divinity as Pantheism can ascribe to Christ is, in point of fact, no divinity at all. When God is nature, and nature is God, everything indeed is divine, but also nothing is divine ; and Christ shares this phantom-divinity with the universe, nay, with the agencies of moral evil itself. In truth, our God does not exist in the apprehension of Pantheistic thinkers ; since, when such truths as creation and personality are denied, the very idea of God is fundamentally sapped, and although the prevailing belief of mankind may still be humoured by a discreet retention of its conventional language, the broad practical result is in reality neither more nor less than Atheism.

The Creator Distinct from the Creature.

Certainly Pantheism would never have attained to so strong a position as that which it actually holds in European as well as in Asiatic thought unless it had embodied a great element of truth, which is too often ignored by some arid Theistic systems. To that element of truth we Christians do justice when we confess the omnipresence and incomprehensibility of God ; and still more, when we trace the gracious consequences of His actual incarnation in Jesus Christ. But we Christians know also that the Great Creator is essentially distinct from the work of His hands, and that He is what He is, in utter independence of the feeble thought whereby He enables us to apprehend His existence. We know that all which is not Himself is upheld in being from moment to moment by the fiat of His almighty will. We know that His existence is, strictly and in the highest sense, personal. Could we deny these truths it would be as easy to confess the Divinity of Christ as it would be impossible to deny the divinity of any created being. If we are asked to believe in an impersonal God who has no real existence apart from creation or from created thought in order that we may experience fewer philosophical difficulties in

acknowledging our Lord's Divinity, we reply that our faith cannot thus sacrifice the substance of the first truth of the creed that we may retain the phraseology of the second. We dare not thus degrade, or rather annihilate, the very idea of God even for the sake of securing a semblance (more it could not be) of those precious consolations which the Christian heart seeks and finds at the manger of the Divine Child in Bethlehem, or before the Cross of the Lord of Glory on Mount Calvary.

Not Merely Divine Gifts.

No, the Divinity of Jesus is not divinity in the sense of Socinianism. It is no mere manifestation whether of the highest human goodness or of the noblest of Divine gifts. It is not merely a divine presence vouchsafed to the soul; it is not merely an intercommunion of the soul and God, albeit maintained even ceaselessly—maintained in its fullness from moment to moment. Such indeed was the high grace of our Lord's sinless humanity, but that grace was not itself His Divinity. For a work of grace, however beautiful and perfect, is one thing; an uncreated divine essence is another. In the Socinian sense of the term you all my Christian brethren are, or may be, divine; you may show forth God's moral glory, if less fully, yet not less truly, than did Jesus. Your life of grace is as much a gift as your natural life; but however glorious may be the gift, aye, though it raise you from the dust to the very steps of God's throne, the gift is a free gift after all, and its greatness does but suggest the interval which parts the recipient from the inexhaustible and boundless life of the Giver.

His Essential Oneness with the Father.

Most true indeed it is that the perfect holiness which shone forth from our Lord's human life has led thousands of souls to perceive the truth of His essential Godhead. When once it is seen that His moral greatness is really unique, it is natural to seek and to accept, as a basis of this greatness, His possession of a unique relationship to the fountain of all goodness. Thus the Sermon on the Mount leads us naturally on to those discourses in John's Gospel

in which Christ unveils His essential Oneness with the Father. But the ethical premise is not to be confused with the ontological conclusion. It is true that a boundless love of man shone forth from the life of Christ ; it is true that each of the Divine attributes is commensurate with the Divine essence. It is true that " he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." But it is not true that every moral being which God blesses by His presence is God. The Divine presence, as vouchsafed to Christian men, is a gift superadded to and distinct from the created personality to which it is accorded ; there was a time when it had not been given. But this blessed gift does not justify us in treating the creature to whom it is vouched of as the Infinite and Eternal God. When Socinianism deliberately names God it means equally with ourselves, not merely a perfect moral being, not merely perfect love and perfect justice, but one whose knowledge and whose power are as boundless as His love. It does not mean that Christ is God in this, the natural sense of the word, when it confesses His moral divinity ; yet, beyond all controversy, this full and natural sense of the term is the sense of the Nicene Creed.

The Christ of Arius a Creature with a Beginning.

No, Jesus Christ is not Divine in the sense of Arius. He is not the most eminent and ancient of the creatures, decorated by the necessities of a theological controversy with that name which a serious piety can dare to yield to one being alone. Ascribe to the Christ of Arius an antiquity as remote as you will from the age of the incarnation, place him at a height as high as any you can conceive, above the highest archangel ; still what, after all, is this ancient, this super-angelic being but a creature who had a beginning, and who, if the author of his existence should so will, may yet cease to be ? Such a being, however exalted, is parted from the Divine essence by a fathomless chasm ; whereas the Christ of Catholic Christendom is internal to that essence ; He is of one substance with the Father, and in this sense, as distinct from any other, He is properly and literally Divine.

Three Distinctions Exist.

This assertion of the Divinity of Jesus Christ depends on a truth beyond itself. It postulates the existence in God of certain real distinctions having their necessary basis in the essence of the Godhead. That three such distinctions exist is a matter of revelation. In the common language of the western Church these distinct forms of being are named persons. Yet that term cannot be employed to denote them without considerable intellectual caution. As applied to men, person implies the antecedent conception of a species which is determined for the moment, and by the force of the expression into a single incommunicable modification of being. But the conception of a species is utterly inapplicable to that one supreme essence which we name God ; and, according to the terms of the Catholic doctrine, the same essence belongs to each of the Divine Persons. Not, however, that we are therefore to suppose nothing more to be intended by the revealed doctrine than three varying relations of God in His dealings with the world. On the contrary, His self-revelation has for its basis certain eternal distinctions in His nature which are themselves altogether anterior to and independent of any relation to created life. Apart from these distinctions, the Christian revelation of an eternal fatherhood, of a true incarnation of God, and of a real communication of His Spirit, is but the baseless fabric of a dream. These three distinct "subsistences," which we name Father, Son, and Spirit, while they enable us the better to understand the mystery of the self-sufficing and blessed life of God before He surrounded Himself with created beings are also strictly compatible with the truth of the Divine Unity. And when we say that Jesus Christ is God we mean that in the Man Christ Jesus, the second of these persons or subsistances, one in essence with the first and with the third, vouchsafed to become incarnate.

PERFECT MAN AND ETERNAL GOD.

IV. The position then which is before us in these lectures is briefly the following : Our Lord Jesus Christ, being truly and perfectly man, is also, according to His higher pre-

existent nature, very and eternal God; since it was the Second Person of the ever blessed Trinity who, at the Incarnation, robed Himself with a human body and a human soul. Such explicit language will, of course, encounter objections in more than one quarter of the modern world; and if of these objections one or two prominent samples be rapidly noticed, it is possible that, at least in the case of certain minds, the path of our future discussion will be cleared of difficulties which are at present more or less distinctly supposed to obstruct it.

The Objection of the Aesthetic.

1. One objection to our attempt in these lectures may be expected to proceed from that graceful species of literary activity which may be termed, without our discrediting it, Historical Aestheticism. The protest will take the form of an appeal to the sense of beauty. True beauty, it will be argued, is a creation of nature; it is not improved by being meddled with. The rocky hill side is no longer beautiful when it has been quarried, nor is the river-course when it has been straightened and deepened for purposes of navigation, nor is the forest which has been fenced and planted, and made to assume the disciplined air of a symmetrical plantation. In like manner, you urge, that incomparable figure whom we meet in the pages of the New Testament has suffered in the apprehensions of orthodox Christians, from the officious handling of a too inquisitive scholasticism.

Well, my brethren, if the object of the Gospel be attained when it has added one more chapter to the poetry of human history, when it has contributed one more figure to the world's gallery of historical portraits, upon which a few educated persons may periodically expend some spare thought and feeling - if this be so, you are probably right.

Where is Christ Now?

But there is a solemn question which must be asked, and which, if a man is in earnest he will inevitably ask, and that question will at once carry him beyond the narrow horizon of a literary aestheticism in his treatment of the matter before us. . . . My brethren, where is Jesus Christ now?

and what is He ? Does He only speak to us from the pages which were traced by His followers eighteen centuries ago Is He no more than the first of the shadows of the past, th first of memories, the first of biographies, the most perfec of human ideals ? Is He only an ideal after all ? Does He think of you, care for you, act upon you ? Can He help you ? Can He save you from your sins, can He blot out their stains and crush their power, can He deliver you in your death-agony from the terrors of dissolution and bid you live with Him in a brighter world for ever ? If such questions are to remain unanswered, do not shut your eyes to the certain consequence. A Christ who is conceived of as only pictured in an ancient literature may indeed furnish you with the theme of a magnificent poetry, but He cannot be the present object of your religious life.

The Objection to Dogma.

2. But the present inquiry may be objected to on higher grounds than those of literary and æsthetic taste. "Are there not," it will be pleaded, "moral reasons for deprecating such discussions ? Surely the dogmatic and theological temper is sufficiently distinct from the temper which aims, beyond everything else, at moral improvement. Surely good men may be indifferent divines, while accomplished divines may be false or impure at heart. Nay, more, are not morality and theology not merely distinct, but also more or less antagonistic interests ? Does not the enthusiastic consideration of dogmatic problems tend to divert men's minds from that attention which is due to the practical obligations of life ?

This is what is urged ; and then it is added, "Shall we not best succeed in doing our duty if we try better to understand Christ's human character, while we are careful to keep clear of those abstract and transcendental questions about Him, which, at any rate, have not promoted th cause of moral progress ? "

My brethren, all are agreed as to the importanc studying and copying the human character of Jesus Ch Whether it be really possible to have a sincere admira for the character of Jesus Christ without believing in

Divinity is a question which I shall not shrink from considering hereafter. Certainly our Lord did not Himself exact from His first followers, as an indispensable condition of discipleship, any profession of belief in His Godhead. But why? Simply because His requirements are proportioned to the opportunities of mankind. He had taught as men were able to bear His teaching (John 16. 12). Although His precepts, His miracles, His character, His express language all pointed to the truth of His Godhead, the conscience of mankind was not laid under a formal obligation to acknowledge it until at length He had been "defined" to be "the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Our present moral relation, then, to the truth of Christ's Divinity differs altogether from that in which His first disciples were placed. Our conscience cannot decline to decide in favour of the general duty of adoring Jesus Christ, or against it, Christ either is or is not God. The worship that is paid to Christ either ought to be paid to Him, or it ought to be not merely withheld but denounced. The discussion in hand has a practical present and eminently a moral interest, unless it be consistent with morality to use in the presence of God and man, a language that we do not believe, or as to the meaning of which we are content to be indifferent.

The Objection to Metaphysics.

3. Once more. It may be urged, from a widely different quarter, that our inquiry is dangerous, if not to literary or moral interests, yet to the spirit of simple Christian piety. "Take care," so the warning may run, "lest instead of preaching the Gospel you should be merely building up a theological pyramid. Beware of sacrificing spiritual objects to intellectual ones. Surely the great question for a sinner to consider is whether or not he be justified before God; do not then let us bury the simple Gospel beneath a heap of metaphysics."

Now the matter to be considered is whether this absolute separation between what is assumed to be the "simple Gospel" and what is called "metaphysics" is really

possible. In point of fact the simple Gospel, when we come to examine it, is necessarily on one side metaphysical. You say that the main question is to know that you are justified? Very well; but, omitting all other considerations, let me ask you one question: Who is the Justifier? Can He really justify if He is only man? Does not His power to "save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him" depend upon the fact that He is Himself Divine? Yet when, with John, you confess that He is the Eternal Logos you are dealing with a question of "metaphysics"

The Godhead of Jesus Christ.

There is no question between us, my brethren, as to the supreme importance of a personal understanding and contract between the single soul and the Eternal Being who made and who has redeemed it. But this understanding must depend upon ascertained truths, foremost among which is that of the Godhead of Jesus Christ. And in these lectures an attempt will be made to lay bare and to reassert some few of the bases upon which that cardinal truth itself reposes in the consciousness of the Church, and to kindle perchance, in some souls, a fresh sense of its unspeakable importance. It will be our object to examine such anticipations of this doctrine as are found in the Old Testament; to note how it is implied in the work of Jesus Christ, and how inseparable it is from His recorded consciousness of His personality and mission; to trace its distinct although varying assertion in the writings of His great apostles, and in the earliest ages of His Church, and finally to show how intimate and important are its relations to all that is dearest to the heart and faith of a Christian.

LECTURE II.

Anticipations of the Doctrine in the Old Testament.

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3. 8).

If we endeavour to discover how often, and by what modes of statement, such a doctrine as that of our Lord's Divinity is anticipated in the Old Testament, our conclusion will be materially affected by the belief which we entertain respecting the nature and the structure of Scripture itself.

According to Paul the great doctrines and events of the Gospel dispensation were directly anticipated in the Old Testament. If the sense of the Old Testament became patent in the New, it was because the New Testament was already latent in the Old. "*The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.*" Scripture is thus boldly identified with the mind which inspires it; Scripture is a living Providence. The promise to Abraham anticipates the work of the apostle; the earliest of the Books of Moses determines the argument of the Epistle to the Galatians. Such a position is only intelligible when placed in the light of a belief in the fundamental unity of all revelation, underlying, and strictly compatible with, its superficial variety. And this true, internal unity of Scripture, even when the exact canonical limits of Scripture were still unfixed, was a common article of belief to all Christian antiquity. It was shared by the Church herself with her most vehement heretical opponents. Between Athanasius and the Arians there was no question as to the relevancy of the reference in the Book of Proverbs to the pre-existent Person of our Lord, although there was a vital difference between them as to the true sense and force of that reference. Scripture was believed to contain an

harmonious and integral body of sacred truth, and each part of that body was treated as being more or less directly, more or less ascertainably, in correspondence with the rest. This belief expressed itself in the world-wide practice of quoting from any one book of Scripture in illustration of the mind of any other book.

The Bible the Handiwork of the Eternal Spirit.

The Church of Christ has ever believed her Bible to be throughout, and so emphatically the handiwork of the Eternal Spirit that it is no absurdity in Christians to cite Moses as foreshadowing the teaching of Paul and of John. According to the tenor of Christian belief Moses, Paul, and John are severally regarded as free yet docile organs of one infallible intelligence, who places them at different points along the line of His action in human history ; who, through them and others as the ages pass before Him, slowly unveils His mind ; who anticipates the fullness of later revelations by the hints contained in His earlier disclosures ; who, in the compass of His boundless wisdom, " reacheth from one end to another mightily, and sweetly ordereth all things."

OUR LORD'S DIVINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

I. You will have anticipated, my brethren, the bearing of these remarks upon the question before us. There are explicit references to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity in the Old Testament which we can only deny by discrediting the historical value of the documents which contain them. But there are also occult references to this doctrine which we are not likely to detect, unless, while seeking them, we are furnished with an exegetical principle, such as that of the organic unity of Scripture.

In the Book of Genesis.

1. At the beginning of the Book of Genesis there appear to be intimations of the existence of a plurality of persons within the one essence of God. It is indeed somewhat remarkable that the full significance of the two words by which Moses describes the primal creative act of God was

not insisted upon by the primitive Church teachers. It attracted attention in the Middle Ages, and it was more particularly noticed after the revival of Hebrew letters. When Moses is describing this Divine action he joins a singular verb to a plural noun. Language, it would seem, thus submits to a violent anomaly that she may the better hint at the presence of several powers or persons who not merely act together, but who constitute a single agent. We are indeed told that this name of God, Elohim, was borrowed from Polytheistic sources, that it was retained in its plural form in order to express majesty or magnificence, and that it was then united to singular verbs and adjectives in order to make it do the work of a Monotheistic Creed. But on the other hand it is confessed on all sides that the promulgation and protection of a belief in the unity of God was the central and dominant object of the Mosaic literature and of the Mosaic legislation. Surely such an object would not have been imperilled for no higher purpose than that of amplification. There must have been a truth at stake which demanded the risk. The Hebrew language could have described God by singular forms, such as El, Eloah, and no question would have been raised as to the strictly Monotheistic force of those words. The Hebrew language might have "amplified" the idea of God thus conveyed by less dangerous processes than the employment of a plural form. Would it not have done so, unless the plural form had been really necessary, in order to suggest some complex mystery of God's inner life, until that mystery should be more clearly unveiled by the explicit revelations of a later day? The analogies of the language may indeed prove that the plural form of the word had a majestic force; but the risk of misunderstanding would surely have counterbalanced this motive for using it, unless a vital need had demanded its retention. Nor will the theory that the plural noun is merely expressive of majesty avail to account for the plural verb in the words,

"Let Us Make Man"

(Gen. 1. 26). In these words, which precede the final act and climax of the Creation, the early fathers detected a

clear intimation of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The supposition that in these words a single person is in a dramatic colloquy with Himself is less reasonable than the opinion that a Divine speaker is addressing a multitude of inferior beings, such as the angels. But apart from other considerations we may well ask, What would be the "likeness" or "image" common to God and to the angels, in which man was to be created? or why should created essences such as the angels be invited to take part in a creative act at all? Each of the foregoing explanations is really weighted with greater difficulties than the Patristic doctrine, to the effect that the verb, "Let us make," points to a plurality of persons within the unity of the one agent, while the "likeness," common to all these Persons, and itself one, suggests very pointedly their participation in an undivided nature. And in such sayings as "Behold the man is become like one of us" (Gen. 3. 22), used with reference to the Fall, or "Go to; let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11. 7), uttered on the eve of the dispersion of Babel, it is clear that an equality of rank is distinctly assumed between the Speaker and those whom He is addressing. The true sense of the comparatively indeterminate language which occurs at the beginning of Genesis is more fully explained by

The Priestly Blessing

which we find prescribed for ritual usage in the Book of Numbers (Num. 6. 23-26). This blessing is spoken of as a putting the *Name* of God, that is to say, a symbol unveiling His nature upon the children of Israel. Here then we discover a distinct limit to the number of the persons who are hinted at in Genesis as being internal to the unity of God. The priest is to repeat the most Holy Name three times. The Hebrew accentuation, whatever be its date, shows that the Jews themselves saw in this repetition the declaration of a mystery in the Divine nature. Unless such a repetition had been designed to secure the assertion of some important truth, a single mention of the Sacred Name would have been more natural in a system, the object of which was to impress belief in the Divine unity upon an

entire people. This significant repetition, suggesting, without distinctly asserting, a Trinity in the being of God, did its work in the mind of Israel.

The Adoration of the Seraphim.

Let us observe the crowning significance of the vision of Isaiah. In that adoration of the most Holy Three, who yet are One ; by the veiled and mysterious Seraphim ; in that deep self-abasement and misery of the prophet, who, though a man of unclean lips, had yet seen with his eyes the King, the Lord of Hosts ; in that last inquiry on the part of the Divine Speaker, the very terms of which reveal Him as One, and yet more than One, what a flood of almost Gospel light is poured upon the intelligence of the elder Church !

The Theophanies.

2. From these adumbrations of personal distinctions within the being of God, we pass naturally to consider that series of remarkable apparitions which are commonly known as the Theophanies, and which form so prominent a feature in the early history of the Old Testament Scriptures. When we are told that God spoke to our fallen parents in Paradise (Gen. 3. 8), and appeared to Abram in his ninty-ninth year, there is no distinct intimation of the mode of the Divine manifestation. But when " Jehovah appeared " to the great patriarch by the oak of Mamre (Gen. 18. 1), Abraham " lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him." Abraham bows himself to the ground ; he offers hospitality ; he waits by his visitors under the tree, and they eat. One of the three is the spokesman ; he appears to bear the sacred name Jehovah (Gen. 18. 17) ; He is seemingly distinguished from the " two angels " who went first to Sodom ; He promises that the aged Sarah shall have a son, and that " all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham." With Him Abraham intercedes for Sodom ; by Him judgment is afterwards executed upon the guilty city. When it is said that " Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of Heaven," a sharp distinction is established between a

visible and an Invisible Person, each bearing the most Holy Name.

The Angel of the Lord.

This distinction introduces us to the Mosaic and later representations of that very exalted and mysterious being, the Angel of the Lord. The Angel of the Lord is certainly distinguished from Jehovah ; yet the names by which he is called, the powers which he assumes to wield, the honour which is paid to him show that in him there was at least a special presence of God. He seems to speak sometimes in his own name, and sometimes as if he were not a created personality, but only a veil or organ of the Higher Nature that spoke and acted through him. Thus he assures Hagar, as if speaking in the character of an ambassador from God, that " the Lord had heard her affliction " (Gen. 16. 11). Yet he promises her, " I will multiply thy seed exceedingly," and she in return " called the Name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou, God, seest me." He arrests Abraham's arm when the patriarch is on the point of carrying out God's bidding by offering Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22. 11, 12) ; yet he associates himself with Him from whom " Abraham had not withheld his son, his only son." He accepts for himself Abraham's obedience as rendered to God, and he subsequently at a second appearance adds the promise, " In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed My voice." He appears to Jacob in a dream ; he announces himself as " the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me " (Gen. 31. 11, 13). Thus he was " the Lord " who in Jacob's vision at Bethel had stood above the ladder and said, " I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." He was, as it seems, the chief of that angel-host whom Jacob met at Mahanaim (Gen. 32. 1) ; with him Jacob wrestled for a blessing at Peniel ; of him Jacob says, " I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." When blessing the sons of Joseph, the dying patriarch invokes not only " the God which fed me all my life long unto this day," but also " the Angel which redeemed me from all evil."

In the Burning Bush.

In Midian the angel of the Lord appears to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." The bush remains miraculously unconsumed. "Jehovah" sees that Moses turns aside to see, and "Elohim" calls to Moses out of the midst of the bush. The very ground on which Moses stands is holy; and the lawgiver hides his face, "for he was afraid to look upon God." The Speaker from the midst of the bush announces Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. His are the mercy, the wisdom, the providence, the power, the authority of the Most High; nay, all the Divine attributes. When the children of Israel are making their escape from Egypt the Angel of the Lord leads them; in the hour of danger he places himself between the camp of Israel and the host of Pharaoh (Gen. 14. 19). How deeply Isreal felt the value of his protecting care we may learn from the terms of the message to the King of Edom (Num. 20. 16). God promises that the angel shall keep Israel in the way and bring the people to Canaan; his presence is a guarantee that the Amorites and other idolatrous races shall be cut off. Israel is to obey this angel, and to provoke him not, for the Holy "Name is in him." Even after the sin of the Golden Calf the promised guardianship of the angel is not forfeited, while a distinction is clearly drawn between the angel and Jehovah Himself. Yet the angel is expressly called the Angel of God's presence (Exod. 33. 14); he fully represents God. God must in some way have been present in him. No merely created being, speaking and acting in his own right, could have spoken to men, or have allowed men to act towards himself, as did the Angel of the Lord. Thus he withstands Balaam on his faithless errand, and bids him go with the messengers of Balak, but adds, "Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak."

"Captain of the Host of the Lord."

As "Captain of the host of the Lord" he appears to Joshua in the plain of Jericho. Joshua worships God in him (Joshua 6. 2), and the angel asks of the conqueror of Canaan

the same tokens of reverence as had been exacted from Moses. Besides the reference in the Song of Deborah to the curse pronounced against Meroz by the Angel of the Lord, the Book of Judges contains accounts of three appearances, in each of which we are scarcely sensible of the action of a created personality, so completely is the language and bearing that of the Higher Nature present in the angel. At Bochim he expostulates with the assembled people for their breach of the covenant in failing to exterminate the Canaanites. God speaks by him as in His own Name ; He refers to the covenant which He had made with Israel, and to His bringing the people out of Egypt ; He declares that on account of their disobedience He will not drive the heathen nations out of the land (Judges 2. 1-5). In the account of his appearance to Gideon the angel is called sometimes the Angel of the Lord, sometimes the Lord, or Jehovah. He bids Gideon attack the Midianite oppressors of Israel and adds the promise, " I will be with thee." Gideon places an offering before the angel that he may, if he wills, manifest his character by some sign. The angel touches the offering with the end of his staff, whereupon fire rises up out of the rock and consumes the offering. The angel disappears, and Gideon fears that he will die because he has seen " the Angel of the Lord face to face " (Judges 6. 11-22). When the wife of Manoah is reporting the angel's first appearance to herself, she says that " a man of God came to her," " and his countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very terrible." She thus speaks of the angel as of a being already known to Israel. At his second appearance the angel bids Manoah, who " knew not that he was an angel of the Lord," and offered him common food to offer sacrifice unto the Lord. The angel refuses to disclose his name, which is " Wonderful " (cf. Isa. 9. 6). When Manoah offers a kid with a meat-offering upon a rock unto the Lord the angel mounts visibly up to Heaven in the flame of the sacrifice. Like Gideon, Manoah fears death after such near contact with so exalted a being of the other world. " We shall surely die," he exclaims to his wife, " because we have seen God " (Judges 13. 6-22).

Who was this Angel?

But you ask, Who was this angel? The Jewish interpreters vary in their explanations. The earliest fathers answer with general unanimity that he was the Word or Son of God Himself. Whether in the Theophanies the Word or Son actually appeared, or whether God made a created angel the absolutely perfect exponent of His thought and will, do they not point in either case to a purpose in the Divine mind which would only be realised when man had been admitted to a nearer and more palpable contact with God than was possible under the patriarchal or Jewish dispensations? Do they not suggest, as their natural climax and explanation, some personal self-unveiling of God before the eyes of His creatures? Would not God appear to have been training His people, by this long and mysterious series of communications, at length to recognise and to worship Him when hidden under, and indissolubly one with a created nature? Apart from the specific circumstance which may seem to have explained each theophany at the time of its taking place, and considering them as a series of phenomena, is there any other account of them so much in harmony with the general scope of Holy Scripture, as that they were successive lessons addressed to the eye and to the ear of ancient piety, in anticipation of a coming incarnation of God?

"Wisdom" in the Old Testament.

3. This preparatory service, if we may venture so to term it, which had been rendered to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity by the Theophanies in the world of sense was seconded by the upgrowth and development of a belief respecting the Divine *kochmah*, or wisdom, in the region of inspired ideas.

The "Wisdom" of the Jewish Scriptures is certainly more than a human endowment, and even, as it would seem, more than an attribute of God. The "wisdom" is hinted at in the Book of Job. In a well-known passage of majestic beauty Job replies to his own question, Where shall the wisdom be found? (Job 28. 12) He represents wisdom as it exists in God, and as it is communicated in the highest form

to man. In God "the widsom" is that eternal thought in which the Divine Architect ever beheld His future creation. In man wisdom is seen in moral growth: it is "the fear of the Lord," and "to depart from evil." The wisdom is here only revealed as underlying, on the one side, the laws of the physical universe; on the other, those of man's moral nature. Certainly as yet "wisdom" is not in any way represented as personal; but we make a great step in passing to the Book of Proverbs. In the Book of Proverbs the wisdom is co-eternal with Jehovah; wisdom assists Him in the work of creation; wisdom reigns, as one specially honoured, in the palace of the King of Heaven; wisdom is the adequate object of the eternal joy of God; God possesses wisdom,

Wisdom Delights in God.

"Jehovah (says Wisdom) possessed me in the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
I was set up from everlasting,
From the beginning, or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills was I brought forth:
While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields,
Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.
When He prepared the heavens, I was there:
When He set a compass upon the face of the depth:
When He established the clouds above:
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep:
When He gave to the sea His decree,
That the waters should not pass His commandment:
When He appointed the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him:
And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him;
Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth;
And My delights were with the sons of men."

Are we listening to the language of a real person, or only of a poetic personification? A group of critics defends each hypothesis: and those who maintain the latter, point to the picture of folly in the succeeding chapter. But may not a study of that picture lead to a very opposite conclusion? Folly is there no mere abstraction: she is a sinful woman of impure life, "whose guests are in the

depths of Hell." The work of folly is the very work of the Evil One, the real antagonist of the Divine *kochmah*. Folly is the principle of absolute unwisdom, of consummate moral evil. Folly, by the force of the antithesis, enhances our impression that "the wisdom" is personal. The Arians understood the word which is rendered "possessed" in our English Bible to mean "created," and they thus degraded the wisdom to the level of a creature. But they did not doubt that this created wisdom was a real being or person. Modern critics know that if we are to be guided by the clear certain sense of the Hebrew root, we shall read "possessed" and not "created," and they admit without difficulty that the wisdom is uncreated by, and co-eternal with the Lord Jehovah. But they resolve wisdom into an impersonal and abstract idea or quality. The true interpretation is probably related to these opposite mistakes, as was the faith of the Church to the conflicting theories of the Arians and the Sabellians. Each error contributes something to the cause of truth; the more ancient may teach us that the wisdom is personal; the more modern, that it is uncreated and co-eternal with God.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE.

II. There is one element, or condition, of national life with which no nation can dispense. A nation must have its eye upon a future, more or less defined but fairly within the apparent scope of its grasp. Hope is the soul of moral vitality; and any man, or society of men, who would live, in the moral sense of life, must be looking forward to something.

It is a shallow misapprehension which represents the Messianic belief as a sort of outlying prejudice or superstition, incidental to the later thought of Israel, and to which Christianity has attributed an exaggerated importance, that it may the better find a basis in Jewish history for the Person of its Founder. The Messianic belief was in truth interwoven with the deepest life of the people. The promises which formed and fed this belief are distributed along nearly the whole range of the Jewish annals; while the belief rests originally upon sacred traditions which

carry us up to the very cradle of the human family, although they are preserved in the sacred Hebrew books. It is of importance to inquire whether this general Messianic belief included any definite convictions respecting the personal rank of the Being who was its object.

In the gradual unfolding of the Messianic doctrine three stages of development may be noted within the limits of the Hebrew canon, and a fourth beyond it.

The "Seed of the Woman"

1. Of these the first appears to end with Moses. The Protevangelium contains a broad indeterminate prediction of a victory of humanity over the evil principle that had seduced man to his fall. The " seed of the woman " is to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3. 15). With the lapse of years this blessing at first so general and indefinite, is narrowed down to something in store for the posterity of Shem (Gen. 9. 26), and subsequently for the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 22. 18). In Abraham's seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed. Already within this bright but generally indefinite prospect of deliverance and blessing we begin to discern the advent of a personal Deliverer. Paul argues, in accordance with the Jewish interpretation, that " the seed " is here a personal Messiah (Gal. 3. 16) ; the singular form of the word denoting His individuality, while its collective force suggests the representative character of His human nature. The characteristics of this personal Messiah emerge gradually in successive predictions. The dying Jacob looks forward to a Shiloh as One to whom of right belongs the regal and legislative authority (Gen. 49. 10), and to whom the obedient nations will be gathered. Balaam sings of the star that will come out of Jacob and the Sceptre that will rise out of Israel (Num. 24. 17). This is something more than an anticipation of the reign of David : it manifestly points to the glory and power of a Higher Royalty. Moses (Deut. 18. 18, 19) foretells a Prophet who would in a later age be raised up from among the Israelites, like unto himself. This Prophet accordingly was to be the Lawgiver, the Teacher, the Ruler, the Deliverer of Israel.

Kingdom to David for Ever.

2. The second stage of the Messianic doctine centres in the reigns of David and Solomon. The promise of a kingdom to David and to his house *for ever* (2 Sam. 7. 16), a promise on which, we know, the great Psalmist rested at the hour of his death (2 Sam. 23. 5), could not be fulfilled by any mere continuation of his dynasty on the throne of Jerusalem. It implied, as both David and Solomon saw, some Superhuman Royalty. Of this Royalty the Messianic Psalms present us with a series of pictures, each of which illustrates a distinct aspect of its dignity, while all either imply or assert the Divinity of the King. In the second Psalm, for instance, Messiah is associated with the Lord of Israel as His anointed Son, while against the authority of both the heathen nations are rising in rebellion. Messiah's inheritance is to include all heathendom ; His Sonship is not merely theocratic or ethical, but Divine. All who trust in Him are blessed ; all who incur His wrath must perish with a sharp and swift destruction. In the first recorded prayer of the Church of Christ (Acts 4. 25, 26), in Paul's sermon at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13. 33), in the argument which opens the Epistle of the Hebrews (Heb. 1. 5 ; cf., Rom. 1. 4), this Psalm is quoted in such senses that if we had no Rabbinical textbooks at hand, we could not doubt the belief of the Jewish Church respecting it. The forty-fifth Psalm is a picture of the peaceful and glorious union of the King Messiah with His mystical Bride, the Church of redeemed humanity. Messiah is introduced as a Divine King reigning among men. His form is of more than human beauty ; His lips overflow with grace ; God has blessed Him for ever, and has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. But

Messiah is also Directly Addressed as God.

He is viewed as seated upon an everlasting throne. Neither of these Psalms can be adapted without exegetical violence to the circumstances of Solomon, or to any other king of ancient Israel ; and the New Testament interprets the picture of the royal epithalamium, not less than that of the

royal triumph over the insurgent heathen, of the one true King, Messiah (Heb. 1. 8). In another Psalm the character and extent of this Messianic Sovereignty are more distinctly pictured (Psa. 72). Solomon, when at the height of his power, sketches a Superhuman King ruling an empire which in its character and in its compass altogether transcends his own. The extremest boundaries of the kingdom of Israel melt away before the gaze of the Psalmist. The new kingdom reaches " from sea to sea, and from the flood unto the world's end." It reaches from each frontier of the Promised Land to the remotest regions of the known world in the opposite quarter. From the Mediterranean it extends to the ocean that washes the shores of Eastern Asia ; from the Euphrates to the utmost West. At the feet of its mighty Monarch all who are most inaccessible to the arms or to the influence of Israel hasten to tender their voluntary submission. The wild sons of the desert, the merchants of Tarshish in the then distant Spain, the islanders of the Mediterranean, the Arab chiefs, the wealthy Nubians, are foremost in proffering their homage and fealty

All Kings to Bow Down to Him.

But all kings are at last to fall down in submission before the Ruler of the new kingdom ; all nations are to do Him service. His empire is to be coextensive with the world : it is also to be coenduring with time. His empire is to be spiritual ; it is to confer peace on the world, but by righteousness. The King will Himself secure righteous judgment, salvation, deliverance, redemption to His subjects. The needy, the afflicted, the friendless will be the especial objects of His tender care. His appearance in the world will be like the descent of " the rain upon the mown grass ; " the true life of man seems to have been killed out, but it is yet capable of being restored by Him. He Himself, it is hinted, will be out of sight ; but His *Name* will endure for ever ; His Name will " propagate," and men shall be blessed in Him to the end of time. This King is immortal ; He is also all-knowing and all-mighty. " Omniscience alone can hear the cry of every human heart ; Omnipotence alone can bring deliverance to every human sufferer."

David's Son is David's Lord.

Take another representation of this Royalty, that to which our Lord referred in dealing with His Jewish adversaries (Matt. 22. 41-45 ; Psa. 110. 1). David describes his great descendant Messiah as his " Lord " (Psa. 110. 1). Messiah is sitting on the right hand of Jehovah as the Partner of His dignity. Messiah reigns upon a throne which impiety alone could assign to any human monarch ; He is to reign until His enemies are made His footstool ; He is Ruler now, even among His unsubdued opponents. In the day of His power, His people offer themselves willingly to His service ; they are clad not in earthly armour, but " in the beauties of holiness." Messiah is Priest as well as King ; He is an everlasting Priest of that older order which had been honoured by the father of the faithful. Who is this everlasting Priest, this resistless King, reigning thus amid His enemies and commanding the inmost hearts of His servants ? He is David's descendant ; the Pharisees knew that truth. But He is also David's Lord. How could He be both if He was merely human ? The belief of Christendom can alone answer the question which our Lord addressed to the Pharisees. The Son of David is David's Lord because He is God ; the Lord of David is David's Son because He is God Incarnate.

Messianic Prophecy.

3. The third period extends from the reign of Uzziah to the close of the Hebrew Canon in Malachi. Here Messianic prophecy reaches its climax ; it expands into the fullest particularity of detail respecting Messiah's human life ; it mounts to the highest assertions of His Divinity. Isaiah is the richest mine of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. Messiah, especially designated as " the Servant of God," is the central figure in the prophecies of Isaiah. Both in Isaiah and in Jeremiah the titles of Messiah are often and pointedly expressive of His true humanity. He is the Fruit of the earth (Isa. 4. 2) ; He is the Rod out of the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11. 1) ; He is the Branch or Sprout of David, the Zemach (Jer. 23. 5 ; 33. 15 ; Zech. 3. 8 ; 6. 12). He is called by God from His mother's womb (Isa. 49. 1) ; God

has put His Spirit upon Him (Isa. 42. 1). He is anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive (Isa. 61. 1). He is a Prophet ; His work is greater than that of any prophet of Israel. Not merely will He come as a Redeemer to them that turn from transgression in Jacob (Isa. 59. 20), and to restore the preserved Israel (Isa. 49. 6). He is also given as a Light to the Gentiles, as the Salvation of God unto the end of the earth. Such is His spiritual power as Prophet and Legislator that He will write the law of the Lord, not upon tables of stone, but on the heart and conscience of the true Israel. In Zechariah as in David He is an enthroned Priest, but it is the kingly glory of Messiah which predominates throughout the prophetic representations of this period, and in which His superhuman nature is most distinctly suggested. According to Jeremiah the Branch of Righteousness, who is to be raised up among the posterity of David, is a King who will reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth. According to Isaiah this expected King, the Root of Jesse, " will stand for an ensign of the people ; " the Gentiles will seek Him ; He will be

The Rallying-point of the World's Hopes.

the true centre of its government, for is it not written, " Kings will see and arise, princes also will worship " in deep religious awe, " kings will shut their mouths at Him " (Isaiah 52. 15). Righteousness, equity, swift justice, strict faithfulness will mark His administration ; He will not be dependent like a human magistrate upon the evidence of His senses ; He will not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears ; He will rely upon the infallibility of a perfect moral insight. Beneath the shadow of His throne all that is by nature savage, proud, and cruel among the sons of men will learn the habits of tenderness, humility, and love. " The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them." The reign of moral light, of spiritual graces, of innocence, of simplicity

will succeed to the reign of physical and brute force. The old sources of moral danger will become harmless through His protecting presence and blessing; "the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den" (Isa. 11. 8); and in the end "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Daniel is taught that at the "anointing of the Most Holy"—after a defined period—God will "finish the transgressions," and "make an end of sins," and "make reconciliation for iniquity," and "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9. 24). Zachariah, too, especially points out the moral and spiritual characteristics of the reign of King Messiah. The founder of an eastern dynasty must ordinarily wade through blood and slaughter to the steps of his throne, and must maintain his authority by force. But the daughter of Jerusalem beholds her King coming to her, "Just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass." "The chariots are cut off from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem;" the King "speaks peace unto the heathen;" the "battle-bow is broken;" and yet His dominion extends "from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9. 9, 10).

The Suffering Messiah.

In harsh and utter contrast, as it seems, to this representation of Messiah as a Jewish King, the moral conqueror and ruler of the world, there is another representation of Him which belongs to the Davidic period as well as to that of Isaiah. Messiah had been typified in David persecuted by Saul and humbled by Absalom, no less truly than He had been typified in Solomon surrounded by all the glory of his imperial court. If Messiah reigns in the forty-fifth or in the seventy-second Psalms, He suffers, nay, He is pre-eminent among the suffering, in the twenty-second. We might suppose that the suffering Just One, who is described by David, reaches the climax of anguish; but the portrait of an archetypal sorrow has been even more minutely touched by the hand of Isaiah. In both writers, however, the deepest humiliations and woes are confidently

treated as the prelude to an assured victory. The Psalmist passes from what is little less than an elaborate programme of the historical circumstances of the crucifixion to an announcement that by these unexampled sufferings the heathen will be converted, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles will be brought to adore the true God (Psa. 22. 1-21). The prophet describes the Servant of God as "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53); His sorrows are viewed with general satisfaction; they are accounted a just punishment for His own supposed crimes. Yet in reality He bears our infirmities and carries our sorrows; His wounds are due to our transgressions; His stripes have a healing virtue for us. His sufferings and death are a trespass-offering; on Him is laid the iniquity of all. If in Isaiah the inner meaning of the tragedy is more fully insisted on, the picture itself is not less vivid that than of the Psalter. The suffering Servant stands before His judges; "His visage is so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men;" like a lamb, innocent, defenceless, dumb, He is led forth to the slaughter; "He is cut off from the land of the living." Yet the prophet pauses at His grave to note that He "shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," that God "will divide Him a portion with the great," and that He will Himself "divide the spoil with the strong." And all this is to follow "because He hath poured out His soul unto death." His death is to be the condition of His victory; His death is the destined instrument whereby He will achieve His mediatorial reign of glory.

The Redeemer is the Creator.

We will not lay stress upon the fact that in Isaiah the Redeemer of Israel and of men is constantly asserted to be the Creator, who by Himself will save His people. Significant as such language is as to the bent of the Divine mind, it is not properly Messianic. But in that great prophecy the "Son" who is given to Israel receives a fourfold name. He is a Wonder-Counsellor, or Wonderful, above all earthly beings; He possesses a nature which man cannot fathom, and He thus shares and unfolds the Divine

Mind. He is the Father of the Everlasting Age or of Eternity. He is the Prince of Peace. Above all, He is expressly named the Mighty God. Conformably with this, Jeremiah calls Him Jehovah Tsidkenu, as Isaiah had called Him Emmanuel. Micah speaks of His eternal pre-existance as Isaiah had spoken of His endless reign. Daniel predicts that His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away. Zechariah terms Him the Fellow or Equal of the Lord of Hosts, and refers to His incarnation and still more clearly to His passion as being that of Jehovah Himself. Haggai implies His Divinity by foretelling that His presence will make the glory of the second temple greater than the glory of the first. Malachi points to Him as the Angel of the Covenant, as Jehovah whom Israel was seeking, and who would suddenly come to His temple, as the Sun of Righteousness.

A Messiah Divine as Well as Human.

Read this language as a whole ; read it by the light of the great doctrine which it attests, and which in turn illuminates it, the doctrine of a Messiah, Divine as well as human. All is natural, consistent, full of point and meaning. But divorce it from that doctrine in obedience to a foregone and arbitrary placitum of the negative criticism, to the effect that Jesus Christ shall be banished at any cost from the scroll of prophecy—how full of difficulties does such language forthwith become, how overstrained and exaggerated, how insipid and disappointing !

A Jewish Caesar Expected.

4. The last stage of the Messianic doctrine begins only after the close of the Hebrew Canon. Among the Jews of Alexandria the hope of a Messiah seems to have fallen into the background. Among the peasantry, and in the schools of Palestine, the Messianic doctrine lived on. The literary or learned form of the doctrine, being based on and renewed by the letter of Scripture, was higher and purer than the impaired and debased belief which gradually established itself among the masses of the people. The popular degradation of the doctrine may be traced to the later

political circumstances of the Jews, acting upon the secular and materialised element in the national character. They dwelt more and more eagerly upon the pictures of His world-wide conquest and imperial sway, and they construed those promises of coming triumph in the most earthly and secular sense ; they looked for a Jewish Alexander or for a Jewish Cæsar. The New Testament exhibits the popular form of the Messianic doctrine as it lay in the minds of Galileans, of Samaritans, of the men of Jerusalem. It is plain how deeply, when our Lord appeared, the hope of a Deliverer had sunk into the heart both of peasant and townsman ; yet it is equally plain how earthly was the taint which had passed over the popular apprehension of this glorious hope since its first full proclamation in the days of the prophets. Doubtless there were saints like the aged Simeon, whose eyes longed sore for the Divine Christ foretold in the great age of Hebrew prophecy. But generally speaking, the piety of the enslaved Jew had become little else than a wrong-headed patriotism. The Apostles themselves, at one time, looked mainly or only for a temporal prince, and the people who were willing to hail Jesus as King Messiah and to conduct Him in royal pomp to the gates of the holy city had so lost sight of the real eminence which Messiahship involved that when He claimed to be God they endeavoured to stone Him for blasphemy, and this claim of His was in point of fact the crime for which their leaders persecuted Him to death.

The Jews Reject their Messiah.

And yet when Jesus Christ presented Himself to the Jewish people He did not condescend to sanction the misbelief of the time, or to swerve from the tenor of the ancient revelation. He claimed to satisfy the national hopes of Israel by a prospect which would identify the future of Israel with that of the world. He professed to answer to the full, unmutilated, spiritual expectations of prophets and righteous men. They had desired to see and had not seen Him, to hear and had not heard Him. Long ages had passed, and the hope of Israel was still unfulfilled. Psalmists had turned back in accents wellnigh of despair to the great

deliverance from the Egyptian bondage when the Lord brake the heads of the dragons in the waters and brought fountains out of the hard rock. Yet when at last in the fullness of time He came, that He might satisfy the desire of the nations, He was rejected by a stiff-necked generation because He was true to the highest and brightest anticipations of His Advent. A Christ who had contented Himself with the debased Messianic idea of the Herodian period might have precipitated an insurrection against the Roman rule, and might have antedated, after whatever intermediate struggles, the fall of Jerusalem. Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Divine Messiah of David and of Isaiah and therefore He died upon the Cross to achieve, not the political enfranchisement of Palestine, but the spiritual redemption of humanity.

The Lord our God is One Lord.

(*a*) Permit me to repeat an observation which has already been hinted at. The several lines of teaching by which the Old Testament leads up to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity are at first sight apparently at issue with that primary truth of which the Jewish people and the Jewish Scriptures were the appointed guardians. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." That was the fundamental law of the Jewish belief and polity. How copious are the warnings against the surrounding idolatries in the Jewish Scriptures! With what varied, what delicate, what incisive irony do the sacred writers lash the pretensions of the most gorgeous idol-worships while guarding the solitary Majesty and the unshared prerogatives of the God of Israel. And yet this discriminating and fundamental truth does but throw out into sharper outline and relief those suggestions of personal distinctions in the Godhead; that personification of the wisdom, if indeed the wisdom be not a person; those visions in which a Divine Being is so closely identified with the angel who represents Him; those successive predictions of a Messiah personally distinct from Jehovah, yet also the Saviour of men, the Lord and Ruler of all, the Judge of the nations, Almighty, Everlasting, nay, One whom prophecy designates as God.

How was the Old Testament consistent with itself, how was it loyal to its leading purpose, to its very central and animating idea, unless it was in truth entrusted with a double charge ; unless, besides teaching explicitly the Creed of Sinai, it was designed to teach implicitly a fuller revelation, and to prepare men for the Creed of the day of Pentecost ?

Minute Prediction that Cannot be Denied.

(*b*) It may be urged that the Old Testament might conceivably have set forth the doctrine of Christ's Godhead in other and more energetic terms than those which it actually employs. Even if this should be granted, let us carefully bear in mind that the witness of the Old Testament to this truth is not confined to the texts which expressly assert that Messiah should be Divine. The human life of Messiah, His supernatural birth, His character, His death, His triumph, are predicted in the Old Testament with a minuteness which utterly defies the rationalistic insinuation that the argument from prophecy in favour of Christ's claims may after all be resolved into an adroit manipulation of sundry more or less irrelevant quotations. No amount of captious ingenuity will destroy the substantial fact that the leading features of our Lord's human manifestation were announced to the world some centuries before He actually came among us. Do I say that to be the subject of prophecy is of itself a proof of Divinity ? Certainly not. But at least when prophecy is so copious and elaborate, and yet withal so true to the facts of history which it predicts, its higher utterances, which lie beyond the verification of the human senses, acquire corresponding significance and credit. If the circumstances of Christ's human life were actually chronicled by prophecy, prophecy is entitled to submissive attention when she proceeds to assert, in whatever terms, that the Christ whom she has described is more than man. With His hand upon the Jewish Canon, Jesus Christ could look opponents or disciples in the face and bid them " Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me."

LECTURE III.

Our Lord's Work in the World a Witness to His Divinity.

"Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's Son? is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this Man all these things?" (Matt. 13. 54-56).

We have now seen how the appearance of a Divine Person, as the Saviour of men, was anticipated by the Old Testament; let us inquire how far Christ's Divinity is attested by the phenomenon which we encounter in the formation and continuity of the Christian Church.

THE CHARACTER OF OUR LORD'S PLAN.

I. When modern writers examine and discuss the proportions and character of our Lord's "plan," a Christian believer may rightly feel that such a term can only be used in such a connection with some mental caution. He may urge that in forming an estimate of strictly human action we can distinguish between a plan and its realisation; but that this distinction is obviously inapplicable to Him with whom resolve means achievement, and who completes His action, really if not visibly, when He simply wills to act. If it is true that success can never be really doubtful to Omnipotence, and that no period of suspense can be presumed to intervene between a resolve and its accomplishment in the Eternal Mind; yet, on the other hand, it is a part of our Lord's gracious condescension that He has, if we may so speak, entered into the lists of history. He has come among us as one of ourselves; He has made Himself of no reputation, and has been found in fashion as a man. He has despoiled Himself of His advantages; He has actually stated what He proposed to do in the world, and has thus submitted Himself to the verdict of man's

experience. His own words are our warrant for comparing them with His work, and He has interposed the struggles of centuries between His words and their fulfilment. Let us inquire what it was that He purposed to effect within the province of human action and history.

The Founder of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now the answer to this question is simply that He proclaimed Himself the Founder of a world-wide and imperishable society. He did not propose to act powerfully upon the convictions and the characters of individual men, and then to leave to them when they believed and felt alike the liberty of voluntarily forming themselves into an association with a view to reciprocal sympathy and united action. From the first the formation of a society was not less an essential feature of Christ's plan than was His redemptive action upon single souls. This society was not to be a school of thinkers, nor a self-associated company of enterprising fellow-workers ; it was to be a kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, or, as it is also called, the Kingdom of God. For ages indeed the Jewish theocracy had been a kingdom of God upon earth. God was the one true King of ancient Israel. He was felt to be present in Israel as a Monarch living among His subjects. The temple was His palace ; its sacrifices and ritual were the public acknowledgment of His present but invisible Majesty. But the Jewish polity, considered as a system, was an external rather than an internal kingdom of God. Jesus Christ our Lord announced a new Kingdom of God, and by terming it *the* Kingdom of God He implied that it would first fully deserve that sacred name as corresponding with Daniel's prophecy of a fifth empire. Let us, moreover, note in passing that when using the word " kingdom " our Lord did not announce a republic. He willed to be King, absolutely and without a rival, in the new society, and the nature and extent of His legislation plainly shows us in what sense He meant to reign.

The Laws of the Kingdom.

The original laws of the new Kingdom are for the most part set forth by its Founder in His Sermon on the Mount.

After a preliminary statement of the distinctive character which was to mark the life and bearing of those who would fully correspond to His mind and will, and a further sketch of the nature and depth of the influence which His subjects were to exert upon other men, He proceeds to define the general relation of the new law which He is promulgating to the law that had preceded it. The vital principle of His legislation, namely, that moral obedience shall be enforced, not merely in the performance of or in the abstinence from outward acts, but in the deepest and most secret springs of thought and motive is traced in its application to certain specific prescriptions of the older law (Matt. 5); while other ancient enactments are modified or set aside by the stricter purity, the genuine simplicity of motive and character, the entire unselfishness and the superiority to personal prejudices and exclusiveness which the new Lawgiver insisted on.

The Life of the Kingdom.

Notice also, the required life of the new Kingdom is then exhibited in detail; the duties of almsgiving, of prayer, and of fasting are successively enforced; but the rectification of the ruling motive is chiefly insisted on as essential. In performing religious duties God's will and not any conventional standard of human opinion is to be kept steadily before the eye of the soul. The Legislator insists upon the need of a single, supreme, unrivalled motive in thought and action unless all is to be lost. The uncorruptible treasure must be in Heaven; the body of the moral life will only be full of light if "the eye is single;" no man can serve two masters. The birds and the flowers suggest the lesson of trust in and devotion to the one source and end of life; all will really be well with those who in very deed seek His Kingdom and His righteousness. Charity in judgment of other men, circumspection in communicating sacred truth, confidence and constancy in prayer, perfect consideration for the wishes of others, yet also a determination to seek the paths of difficulty and sacrifice rather than the broad easy ways trodden by the mass of mankind—these features will mark the conduct of loyal subjects of the Kingdom.

The Features that Mark Loyal Subjects.

They will beware, too, of false prophets, that is, of the movers of spiritual sedition, of teachers who are false to the truths upon which the Kingdom is based and to the temper which is required of its real children. The false prophets will be known by their moral unfruitfulness rather than by any lack of popularity or success. Finally, obedience to the law of the Kingdom is insisted on as the one condition of safety; obedience—as distinct from professions of loyalty—obedience which will be found to have really based a man's life upon the immovable rock at that solemn moment when all that stands upon the sand must utterly perish.

The Real Strength of the Kingdom.

Such a proclamation of the law of the Kingdom as was the Sermon on the Mount already implied that the Kingdom would be at once visible and invisible. But undoubtedly the real strength of the Kingdom, its deepest life, its truest action, are veiled from sight. At bottom it is to be a moral not a material empire; it is to be a realm not merely of bodies but of souls, of souls instinct with intelligence and love. Its seat of power will be the conscience of mankind. Not "here" or "there" in outward signs of establishment and supremacy, but in the free conformity of the thought and heart of its members to the will of their unseen Sovereign shall its power be most clearly recognised. Not as an oppressive outward code, but as an inward buoyant, exhilarating motive will the King's law mould the life of His subjects. Thus the Kingdom of God will be found to be "within" men (Luke 17. 21); it will be set up, not like an earthly empire by military conquest or by violent revolution, but noiselessly and "not with observation." It will be maintained by weapons more spiritual than the sword. "If," said the Monarch, "My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight; but now is My Kingdom not from hence" (John 18. 36).

The "plan" of its Founder with reference to its estab-

lishment in the world is fully developed in that series of parables which, from their common object and from their juxtaposition in Matthew's Gospel, are commonly termed parables of the Kingdom (Matt. 13).

The Parables of the Kingdom.

How various would be the attitudes of the human heart towards the "word of the Kingdom," that is, towards the authoritative announcement of its establishment upon the earth, is pointed out in the parable of the sower. The seed of truth would fall from His hand throughout all time by the wayside, upon stony places, and among thorns, as well as upon the good ground. It might be antecedently supposed that within the limits of the new Kingdom none were to be looked for save the holy and the faithful. But the parable of the tares corrects this too idealistic anticipation; the Kingdom is to be a field in which until the final harvest the tares must grow side by side with the wheat. The astonishing expansion of the Kingdom throughout the world is illustrated by "the grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs. The principle and method of that expansion are to be observed in the action of the "leaven hid in the three measures of meal." The Kingdom is a treasure hid in a field, that is, in a line of thought and inquiry, or in a particular discipline and mode of life, and the wise man will gladly part with all that he has to buy that field. Or the Kingdom is like a merchantman seeking "goodly pearls;" he sells all his possessions that he may buy the "one pearl of great price." But a last parable is added in which the Kingdom is pictured, not as a prize which can be seized by separate souls, but as a vast imperial system, as a world-wide home of all the races of mankind. Like a net thrown into the Galilean lake, so would the Kingdom extend its toils around entire tribes and nations of men; the vast struggling multitude would be drawn nearer and nearer to the eternal shore, until at last the awful and final separation would take place beneath the eye of absolute Justice; the good would be gathered into vessels, but the bad would be cast away.

TWO FEATURES OF HIS PLAN.

The proclamation of this Kingdom was termed the Gospel, that is, the good news of God. Let us note more especially two features in the " plan " of our blessed Lord.

The Originality of the Plan.

1. And, first, its originality. Need I say, brethren, that real originality is rare ? At any rate, my brethren, genius herself has not been slow to confess how difficult it is to say that any one of her triumphs is certainly due to a true originality. In one of his later recorded conversations Goethe was endeavouring to decide what are the real obligations of genius to the influences which inevitably affect it. " Much," said he, " is talked about originality ; but what does originality mean ? We are no sooner born than the world around begins to act upon us ; its action lasts to the end of our lives and enters into everything. All that we can truly call our own is our energy, our vigour, our will."

But our Lord's design to establish upon the earth a Kingdom of souls was an original design. Remark, as bearing upon this originality, our Lord's isolation in His early life. His social obscurity is, in the eyes of thoughtful men, the safeguard and guarantee of His originality. It is not seriously pretended on any side that Jesus Christ was enriched with one single ray of His thought from Athens, from Alexandria, from the mystics of the Ganges or of the Indus, from the disciples of Zoroaster or of Confucius. The centurion whose servant He healed, the Greeks whom He met at the instance of Philip, the Syrophenician woman, the judge who condemned and the soldiers who crucified Him are the few Gentiles with whom He is recorded to have had dealings during His earthly life. But was our Lord equally isolated from the world of Jewish speculation ? Once indeed, when He was twelve years old, He was found in a synagogue, hard by the temple, in close intellectual contact with aged teachers of the law. But all who hear Him, even then, in His early boyhood are astonished at His understanding and answers, and the

narrative of the evangelist implies that the occurrence was not repeated. Moreover, there was no teaching in Judæa at that era which had not, in the true sense of the expression, a sectarian colouring. But what is there in the doctrine or in the character of Jesus that connects Him with a Pharisee a Sadducee, an Herodian, or an Essene type of education ?

No Sectarian.

Is it not most significant that, as Schleiermacher remarks, " of all the sects then in vogue none ever claimed Jesus as representing it, none branded Him with the reproach of apostasy from its tenets ? " Even if we lend an ear to the precarious conjecture that He may have attended some elementary school at Nazareth, it is plain that the people believed Him to have gone through no formal course of theological training. " How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned ? " was a question which betrayed the popular surprise created by a Teacher who spoke with the highest authority, and who yet had never sat at the feet of an accredited doctor. Still less did He, during His early manhood, live in any such atmosphere as that of this place, where interpenetrating all our differences of age and occupation, and even of conviction, there is the magnificent inheritance of a common fund of thought, to which we are all constantly and inevitably debtors.

Thirty Years in a Carpenter's Shop.

Remember He mingled neither with great thinkers who could mould educated opinion, nor with men of gentle blood who could give its tone to society ; He passed those thirty years as an under-workman in a carpenter's shop ; He lived in what might have seemed the depths of mental solitude and of social obscurity ; and then He went forth, not to foment a political revolution, nor yet to found a local school of evanescent sentiment, but to proclaim an enduring and world-wide Kingdom of souls, based upon the culture of a common moral character, and upon intellectual submission to a common creed.

Christ's isolation then is the guarantee of His originality ; yet had He lived as much in public as He lived in obscurity,

where, let me ask, is the Kingdom of Heaven anticipated as a practical project in the ancient world? Was the Kingdom of Heaven even traced in outline by the vague yearnings and aspirations after a better time, which entered so mysteriously into the popular thought of the heathen populations in the Augustan age? Certainly it was an answer, complete yet unexpected, to these aspirations. They did not originate it; they could not have originated it; they primarily pointed to a material rather than to a moral Utopia, to an idea of improvement which did not enter into the plan of the Founder of the new Kingdom. But you ask if the announcement of the Kingdom of Heaven by our Lord was not really a continuation of the announcement of the Kingdom of Heaven by John the Baptist?

Daniel's Fifth Empire.

You might go further and inquire whether this proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven is not to be traced up to the prophecy of Daniel respecting a fifth empire. For the present, of course, I waive the question which an apostle would have raised as to whether the Spirit that spoke in John and in Daniel was not the Spirit of the Christ Himself. But let us inquire whether Daniel or John do anticipate our Lord's plan in such a sense as to rob it of its immediate originality. The Baptist and the prophet foretell the Kingdom of Heaven. Be it so. But a name is one thing, and the vivid, complete grasp of an idea is another. We are accustomed to distinguish with some wholesome severity between originality of phrase and originality of thought. The originality of our Lord's plan lay not in its name, but in its substance. When John said that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, when Daniel represented it as a world-wide and imperishable empire, neither prophet nor Baptist had really anticipated the idea; one furnished the name of a coming system, the other a measure of its greatness. But what was the new institution to be in itself; what were to be its controlling laws and principles; what the animating spirit of its inhabitants; what the sources of its life; what the vicissitudes of its establishment and truimph? These and other elements of His plan are

exhibited by our Lord Himself in His discourses, His parables, His institutions. That which had been more or less vague He made definite, that which had been abstract He threw into a concrete form, that which had been ideal He clothed with the properties of working reality, that which had been scattered over many books and ages He brought into a focus. If prophecy supplied Him with some of the materials which He employed, prophecy could not have enabled Him to succeed in combining them. He combined them because He was Himself; His Person supplied the secret of their combination. His originality is indeed seen in the reality and life with which He lighted up the language used by men who had been sent in earlier ages to prepare His way; but if His creative thought employed these older materials, it did not depend on them. Well might we ask with His astonished countrymen the question which was indeed prompted by their jealous curiosity, but which is natural to a very different temper, "Whence hath this Man this wisdom?"

The Audacity of His Plan.

2. And this opens upon us the second characteristic of our Lord's plan, I mean that which in any merely human plan, we should call its audacity. This audacity is observable, first of all, in the fact that the plan is originally proposed to the world with what might appear to us to be such hazardous completeness. The idea of the Kingdom of God issues almost "as if in a single jet," and with a fully developed body from the thought of Jesus Christ. Put together the Sermon on the Mount, the Charge to the Twelve Apostles, the Parables of the Kingdom, the Discourse in the Supper-room, and the institution of the two great Sacraments, and the plan of our Saviour is before you. And it is enunciated with an accent of calm, unfaltering conviction that it will be realised in human history.

This is a phenomenon which we can only appreciate by contrasting it with the law to which it is so signal an exception. Generally speaking, an ambitious idea appears at first as a mere outline, and it challenges attention in a tentative way. It is put forward inquiringly, timidly,

that it may be completed by the suggestions of friends or modified by the criticism of opponents. The highest genius is always most keenly alive to the vicissitudes which may await its own creations ; it knows with what difficulty a promising project is launched safely and unimpaired out of the domain of abstract speculation into the region of practical human life.

Social reformers tell us despondingly that facts make sad havoc of their fairest theories, and that schemes which were designed to brighten and to beautify the life of nations are either forgotten altogether, or, like the Republic of Plato, are remembered only as famous samples of the impracticable. For whenever a great idea affecting the wellbeing of society is permitted to force its way into the world of facts it is liable to be carried out of its course to be thrust hither and thither, to be compressed, exaggerated, disfigured, mutilated, degraded, caricatured. In the first French Revolution some of the most humane sociological projects were distorted into becoming the very animating principles of wholesale and extraordinary barbarities. In England we are fond of repeating the political maxim that " constitutions are not made, but grow."

A Fully Developed Design.

Now Jesus Christ our Lord was in the true and very highest sense of the term a social reformer ; yet He fully proclaimed the whole of His social plan before He began to realise it. Had He been merely a " great Man " He would have been more prudent. He would have conditioned His design ; He would have tested it ; He would have developed it gradually ; He would have made trial of its working power, and then He would have refashioned or contracted or expanded it before finally proposing it to the consideration of the world. But His actual course must have seemed one of utter and reckless folly unless the event had shown it to be the dictate of a more than human wisdom. He speaks as One who is sure of the compactness and faultlessness of His design ; He is certain that no human obstacle can baulk its realization. He produces it simply without effort, without reserve, without exaggeration;

He is calm because He is in possession of the future, and sees His way clearly through its tangled maze. There is no proof, no distant intimation of a change or of a modification of His plan. He did not, for instance, first aim at a political success and then cover His failure by giving a religious turn or interpretation to His previous manifestoes ; He did not begin as a religious teacher and afterwards aspire to convert His increasing religious influence into political capital. Certainly, with the lapse of time, He enters upon a larger and larger area of ministerial action.

His Majestic Assurance.

He develops with majestic assurance, with decisive rapidity, the integral features of His work ; His teaching centres more and more upon Himself as its central subject, but He nowhere retracts, or modifies, or speaks or acts as would one who feels that he is dependent upon events or agencies which he cannot control. A poor woman pays Him ceremonial respect at a feast, and He simply announces that the act will be told as a memorial of her throughout the world (Matt. 26. 13) ; He bids His apostles do all things whatsoever He had commanded them ; He promises them His Spirit as a guide into all necessary truth, but He invests them with no such discretionary powers as might imply that His design would need revision under possible circumstances, or could be capable of improvement. He calmly turns the glance of His thought upon the long and chequered future which lies clearly displayed before Him, and in the immediate foreground of which is His own humiliating death. He speaks as One who sees beyond the most distant possibilities, and who knows full well that His work is indestructible. " The gates of Hell," He calmly observes, " shall not prevail against it " (Matt. 16. 18) ; " Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

HAS THE PLAN BEEN CARRIED OUT?

II. But has the plan of Jesus Christ been carried out ? Does the Kingdom of Heaven exist on earth ?

The Church of Christ as Answer.

1. The Church of Christ is the living answer to that question. Glance for a moment at the history of the Christian Church from the days of the apostles until now. What is it but a history of the gradual, unceasing self-expansion of an institution which, from the first hour of its existence, deliberately aimed, as it is aiming even now, at the conquest of the world ? Compare the Church which sought refuge and which prayed in the upper chamber at Jerusalem with the Church of which Paul is the pioneer and champion in the latter portion of the Acts of the Apostles, or with the Church to which he refers, as already making its way throughout the world in his apostolical epistles. Compare again the Church of the Apostolical age with the Church of the age of Tertullian. Christianity had then already penetrated, at least in some degree, into all classes of Roman society, and was even pursuing its missionary course in regions far beyond the frontiers of the Empire : in the forests of Germany, in the wilds of Scythia, in the deserts of Africa, and among the unsubdued and barbarous tribes who inhabited the northern extremity of our own island. Again, how nobly conscious is the Church of the age of Augustine of her world-wide mission and of her ever widening area ! How sharply is this consciousness contrasted with the attempt of Donatism to dwarf down the realisation of the plan of Jesus Christ to the narrow proportions of a national or provincial enterprise ! Yet contrast the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries with the Church of the Middle Ages, or with the Church of our own day. In the fourth, and even in the fifth, century, whatever may have been the activity of individual missionaries, the Church was still for the most part contained within the limits of the Empire, and of parts of the Empire she had scarcely as yet taken possession.

The Wonderful Growth of the Church.

It is now less than a thousand years since Jesus Christ received at least the outward submission of the whole of Europe, and from that time to this His Empire has been continually expanding. The newly discovered continents

of Australia and America have successively acknowledged His sway. He is shedding the light of His doctrine first upon one and then upon another of the islands of the Pacific. He has beleagured the vast African continent on either side with various forms of missionary enterprise. And although in Asia there are vast, ancient, and highly organised religions which are still permitted to bid Him defiance, yet India, China, Tartary, and Kamtchatka have within the last few years witnessed heroic labours and sacrifices for the spread of His Kingdom which would not have been unworthy of the purest and noblest enthusiasms of the primitive Church. Nor are these efforts so fruitless as the ruling prejudices or the lack of trustworthy information on such subjects, which are so common in Western Europe, might occasionally suggest.

Already the Kingdom of the Redeemer may be said to embrace three continents ; but what are its prospects, even if we measure them by a strictly human estimate ? Is it not a simple matter of fact that at this moment the progress of the human race is entirely identified with the spread of the influence of the nations of Christendom ?

Is there not Failure in the Plan?

2. But long ere this, my brethren, as I am well aware, you have been prepared to interrupt me with a group of objections. Surely, you will say, this representation of the past, of the present, and of the future of the Church may suffice for an ideal picture, but it is not history. Is not the verdict of history a different and a less encouraging one ? First of all, do Church annals present this spectacle of an ever-widening extension of the Kingdom of Christ ? What then is to be said of the spread of great and vital heresies through countries which once believed with the Church in the One Person and two natures of her Lord ? Again, is it not a matter of historical fact that the Church has lost entire provinces, both in Africa and in the East, since the rise of Mohammedanism ? And are her losses only to be measured by the territorial area which she once occupied, and from which she has been beaten back by the armies of the alien ? Has she not, by the controversies of the

tenth and of the sixteenth centuries, been herself splintered into great sections which still continue to act in outward separation from each other to their own extreme mutual loss and discouragement and to the immense and undisguised satisfaction of all enemies of the Christian name? Are not large bodies of active and earnest Christians living in separation from her communion? Do not our missionary associations perpetually lament their failures to achieve any large permanent conquests for Christ?

Europe Honeycombed with Rationalism.

Once more, is it not a matter of notoriety that the leading nations of Europe are themselves honeycombed by a deadly rationalism which gives no quarter in its contemptuous yet passionate onslaughts on the faith of Christians, and which never calculated more confidently than it does at the present time upon achieving the total destruction of the Empire of Jesus Christ?

My brethren, you do a service to my argument in stating these apparent objections to its force. The substance of your plea cannot be ignored by any who would honestly apprehend the matter before us. The divisions of Christ's family, lamentable and in many ways disastrous as they are, must be ended, if at all, by the warmer charity and more fervent prayers of believing Christians.

Divisions Evidence its Vitality.

But do not these divisions afford an indirect illustration of the extraordinary vitality of the new Kingdom? Has the Kingdom ceased to enlarge its territory since the troubled times of the sixteenth century? On the contrary, it is simply a matter of fact that since that date its ratio of extension has been greater than at any previous period.

But you insist most emphatically upon the spread and upon the strength of modern rationalism. You say that rationalism is enthroned in the midst of civilizations which the Church herself has formed and nursed. You urge that rationalism, like the rottenness which has seized upon the heart of the forest oak, must sooner or later arrest the growth of branch and foliage and bring the tree which it is

destroying to the ground. Now we cannot deny, what is indeed a patent and melancholy fact, that some of the most energetic of the intellectual movements in modern Europe frankly avow and enthusiastically advocate an explicit and total rejection of the Christian creed. Yet it is possible to overrate the importance and to mistake the true significance of this recent advance of unbelief. Of course Christian faith can be daunted or surprised by no form or intensity of opposition to truth when there are always so many reasons for opposing it.

The Gates of Hell shall not Prevail.

We Christians know full well what we have to expect from the human heart in its natural state; while on the other hand we have been told that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church of the Redeemer. But, in speculating on the future destinies of the Church, as they are affected by rationalism, this hopeful confidence of a sound faith may be seconded by the calm estimate of the reflective reason. For, first, it may fairly be questioned whether the publicly proclaimed unbelief of modern times is really more general or more pronounced than the secret but active and deeply penetrating scepticism which during considerable portions of the Middle Ages laid such hold upon the intellect of Europe. Yet the mediæval sceptics cannot be said to have permanently hampered the progress of the Church. Again, modern unbelief may be deemed less formidable when we steadily observe its moral impotence for all constructive purposes. Its strength and genius lie only in the direction of destruction. It has shown no sort of power to build up any spiritual fabric or system which, as a shelter and a discipline for the hearts and lives of men, can take the place of that which it seeks to destroy. Leaving some of the deepest, most legitimate, and most ineradicable needs of the human soul utterly unsatisfied, modern unbelief can never really hope permanently to establish a popular "religion of humanity."

The Intensive Side of His Work.

3. For these and other reasons modern unbelief, although formidable, will not be deemed so full of menace to the

future of the Kingdom of our Lord as may sometimes be apprehended by the nervous timidity of Christian piety. This will appear more certain if from considering the extent of Christ's realm we turn to the intensive side of His work among men. For indeed the depth of our Lord's work in the soul of man has ever been more wonderful than its breadth. The moral intensity of the life of a sincere Christian is a more signal illustration of the reality of the reign of Christ, and of the success of His plan, than is the territorial range of the Christian Empire. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." Christianity may have conferred a new sanction upon civil and domestic relationships among men, and it certainly infused a new life into the most degraded society that the world has yet seen. Still this was not its primary aim ; its primary efforts were directed not to this world, but to the next. How complete at this moment is the reign of Christ in the soul of a sincere Christian ! Christ is not a limited, He is emphatically an absolute Monarch. Yet His rule is welcomed by His subjects. High above the claims of human teachers the tremendous self-assertion of Jesus Christ echoes on from age to age—"I am the Truth." And from age to age the Christian mind responds by a life-long endeavour "to bring every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ." But if Jesus Christ is Lord of the Christian's thought, He is also

Lord of the Christian's Affections.

Beauty it is which provokes love ; and Christ is the highest moral beauty. He does not merely rank as an exponent of the purest morality. He is absolute virtue embodied in a human life, and vividly, energetically set forth before our eyes in the story of the Gospels. As such, He claims to reign over the inmost affections of men. As such, He secures the first place in the heart of every true Christian. To have taken the measure of His beauty and yet not to love Him is, in a Christian's judgment, to be self-condemned. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." And ruling the affections of the Christian, Christ is also King of the sovereign faculty in the

Christianised soul; He is Master of the Christian will. When He has tamed its native stubbornness He teaches it day by day a more and more pliant accuracy of movement in obedience to Himself. Nay, He is not merely its rule of action but its very motive power; each act of devotion and self-sacrifice of which it is capable is but an extension of the energy of Christ's own moral life. "Without Me," He says to His servants, "ye can do nothing" (John 15. 5); and with Paul His servants reply, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Christ is Christianity.

This may be expressed in other terms by saying that, both intellectually and morally, Christ is Christianity. Detach Christianity from Christ and it vanishes before your eyes into intellectual vapour. For it is of the essence of Christianity that, day by day, hour by hour, the Christian should live in conscious, felt, sustained relationship to the ever-living Author of his creed and of his life. Christianity is non-existent apart from Christ; it centres in Christ; it radiates, now as at the first, from Christ. He is indissolubly associated with every movement of the Christian's deepest life. "I live," exclaims the Apostle, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Visible Christian Evidences.

4. Look at certain palpable effects of our Lord's work which lie on the very face of human society. If society, apart from the Church, is more kindly and humane than in heathen times, this is due to the work of Christ on the hearts of men. Christianity is the power which first gradually softened slavery, and is now finally abolishing it. Christianity has proclaimed the dignity of poverty and has insisted upon the claims of the poor with a success proportioned to the sincerity which has welcomed her doctrines among the different peoples of Christendom. The hospital is an invention of Christian philanthropy; the active charity of the Church of the fourth century forced into the Greek language a word for which Paganism had had no occasion. The degradation of woman in the Pagan world

has been exchanged for a position of special privilege and honour, accorded to her by the Christian nations. The sensualism which Pagans mistook for love has been placed under the ban of all true Christian feeling, and in Christendom love is now the purest of moral impulses ; it is the tenderest, the noblest, the most refined of the movements of the soul. And if we are sorrowfully reminded that the prophecy of a world-wide peace within the limits of Christ's Kingdom has not yet been realised ; if Christian lands, in our day as before, are reddened by streams of Christian blood ; yet the utter disdain of the plea of right, the high-handed and barbarous savagery which marked the wars of heathendom have given way to sentiments in which justice can at least obtain a hearing, and which compassion and generosity, drawing their inspirations from the Cross, have at times raised to the level of chivalry.

THE PLAN STILL PROGRESSING.

III. The work of Jesus Christ in the world is a patent fact, and it is still in full progress before our eyes. The question remains, How are we to account for its success ?

No Parallel in Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius.

1. If we are referred to the upgrowth and spread of Buddhism, as to a phenomenon which may rival and explain the triumph of Christianity, it may be sufficient to reply that the writers who insist upon this parallel are themselves eminently successful in analysing the purely natural causes of the success of Cakya-Mouni. They dwell among other points on the rare delicacy and fertility of the Aryan imagination, and on the absence of any strong counter-attraction to arrest the course of the new doctrine in Central and South-Eastern Asia. Nor need we fear to admit that, mingled with the darkest errors, Buddhism contained elements of truth so undeniably powerful as to appeal with great force to some of the noblest aspirations of the soul of man. But Buddhism, vast as is the population which professes it, has not yet made its way into a second continent ; while the religion of Jesus Christ is to be found in

every quarter of the globe. As for the rapid and wide-spread growth of the religion of the False Prophet, it may be explained, partly by the practical genius of Mohammed, partly by the rare qualities of the Arab race. If it had not claimed to be a new revelation Mohammedanism might have passed for a heresy adroitly constructed out of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Its doctrine respecting Jesus Christ reaches the level of Socinianism ; and, as against Polytheism, its speculative force lay in its insistance upon the truth of the Divine Unity.

The Scimitar and Sensuality.

A religion which consecrated sensual indulgence could bid high for an Asiatic popularity against the Church of Christ ; and Mohammed delivered the scimitar, as the instrument of his apostolate, into the hands of a people whose earlier poetry shows it to have been gifted with intellectual fire and strength of purpose of the highest order. But it has not yet been asserted that the Church fought her way, sword in hand, to the throne of Constantine, nor were the first Christians naturally calculated to impose their will forcibly upon the civilised world had they ever desired to do so. Still less is a parallel to the work of Jesus Christ to be found in that of Confucius. Confucius indeed was not a warrior like Mohammed, nor a mystic like Cakya-Mouni ; he appealed neither to superior knowledge nor to miraculous power. Confucius collected, codified, enforced, reiterated all that was most elevated in the moral traditions of China ; he was himself deeply penetrated with the best ethical sentiments of Chinese antiquity. His success was that of an earnest patriot who was also, as a patriot, an anti-quarian moralist. But he succeeded only in China, nor could his work roll back that invasion of Buddhism which took place in the first century of the Christian era. Con-fucianism is more purely national than Buddhism and Mohammedanism, and in this respect it contrasts more sharply with

The World-wide Presence of Christianity.

Yet if Confucianism is unknown beyond the frontiers of China, it is equally true that neither Buddhism nor Moham-

medanism have done more than spread themselves over territories contiguous to their original homes. Whereas, almost within the first century of her existence, the Church had her missionaries in Spain on one hand ; and, as it seems, in India on the other, and her apostle proclaimed that his Master's cause was utterly independent of all distinctions of race and nation. In our own day Christian charity is freely spending its energies and its blood in efforts to carry the work of Jesus Christ into regions where He has been so stoutly resisted by these ancient and highly organised forms of error. Yet in the streets of London or of Paris we do not hear of the labours of Moslem or Buddhist missionaries, instinct with any such sense of a duty and mission to all the world in the name of truth, as that which animates, at this very hour, those heroic pioneers of Christendom whom Europe has sent to Delhi or to Pekin.

Rapid Progress in Spite of Difficulties.

2. From the earliest ages of the Church the rapid progress of Christianity in the face of apparently insurmountable difficulties has attracted attention on the score of its high evidential value. The accomplished but unbelieving historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire undertook to furnish the scepticism of the last century with a systematised and altogether *natural* account of the spread of Christianity.

Gibbon's "Five Causes" are Evidences.

The five " causes " which Gibbon, the historian, instances as sufficient to explain the work of Jesus Christ in the world are the " zeal " of the early Christians, the " doctrine of a future life," the " miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church," the " pure and austere morals of the first Christians," and " the union and discipline of the Christian republic." But surely each of these causes points at once and irresistibly to a cause beyond itself. What was it that made the first Christians so zealous amid surrounding lassitude, so holy amid encompassing pollution ? Why should the doctrine of a life to come have had a totally different effect when proclaimed by the apostles from any

which it had had when taught by Socrates or by Plato, or by other thinkers of the Pagan world ? How came it that a few peasants and tradesmen could erect a world-wide organisation, sufficiently elastic to adapt itself to the genius of races the most various, sufficiently uniform to be everywhere visibly conservative of its unbroken identity ? If the miracles of the early Church, or any one of them, were genuine, how can they avail to explain the *naturalness* of the spread of Christianity ? If they were all false, how extraordinary is this spectacle of a moral triumph, such as even Gibbon acknowledges that of Christianity to be, brought about by means of a vast and odious imposition ! Gibbon's argument would have been more conclusive if the " causes " to which he points could themselves have been satisfactorily accounted for in a *natural* way. Gibbon indicated very clearly the direction which would be taken by modern assailants of the faith ; but he is not singular in having strengthened the cause which he sought to ruin by furnishing an indirect demonstration of the essentially supernatural character of the spread of the Gospel.

Scepticism of "Higher Criticism."

3. But you remind me that if the sceptical artillery of Gibbon is out of date, yet the " higher criticism " of our day has a more delicate, and, as is presumed, a more effective method of stating the naturalistic explanation of the work of Jesus Christ in the world. Jesus Christ, you say, was born at a time when the world itself forced victory upon Him, or at least ensured for Him an easy triumph. The wants and aspirations of a worn-out civilisation, the dim but almost universal presentment of a coming Restorer of mankind, the completed organisation of a great world-empire, combine to do this. You urge that it is possible so to correspond to the moral and intellectual drift of a particular period, that nothing but a perverse stupidity can escape a success which is all but inevitable. You add that Jesus Christ " had this chance " of appearing at a critical moment in the history of humanity, and that when the world was ripe for His religion He and His apostles had just adroitness enough not to be wholly unequal to the

opportunity. The report of His teaching and of His Person was carried on the crest of one of those waves of strange mystic enthusiasm which so often during the age of the Cæsars rolled westward from Asia towards the capital of the world ; and though the Founder of Christianity, it is true, had perished in the surf, His work, you hold, in the nature of things, could not but survive Him.

The Introduction of the True.

(*a*) In this representation, my brethren, there is a partial truth which I proceed to recognise. It is true that the world was weary and expectant ; it is true that the political fabric of the great empire afforded to the Gospel the same facilities for self-extension as those which it offered to the religion of Osiris, or to the fable of Apollonius Tyanæus. But those favourable circumstances are only what we should look for at the hands of a Divine Providence when the true religion was to be introduced into the world, and they are altogether unequal to account for the success of Christianity. A crucified Messiah, for instance, was not a more welcome doctrine in the synagogues of Corinth or of Thessalonica than in those of Jerusalem. Never was Judaism broader, more elastic, more sympathetic with external thought, more disposed to make concessions than in Philo Judæus, the most representative of Hellenistic Jews. Yet Philo insists as stoutly as any Palestinian Rabbi upon the perpetuity of the law of Moses. As long, he says, as the human race shall endure, men shall carry their offerings to the temple of Jerusalem. Indeed, in the first age of Christianity the Jews, both Palestinian and Hellenistic, illustrate, unintentionally of course, but very remarkably, the supernatural law of the expansion of the Church. They persecute Christ in His members, and yet they submit to Him ; they are foremost in enriching the Church with converts after enriching her with martyrs. Wherever the preachers of the Gospel appear it is the Jews who are their fiercest persecutors ; the Jews rouse against them the passions of the Pagan mob, or appeal to the prejudice of the Pagan magistrate. Yet the synagogue is the mission-station from which the Church's action

originally radiates ; the synagogue, as a rule, yields their first spiritual conquests to the soldiers of the Cross. In the Acts of the Apostles we remark on the one hand the hatred and opposition with which the Jew met the advancing Gospel ; on the other, the signal and rapid conquests of the Gospel among the ranks of the Jewish population. The former fact determines the true significance of the latter. Men do not persecute systems which answer to their real sympathies ; Paul was not a Christian at heart, and without intending it, before his conversion. The Church triumphed in spite of the dominant tendencies and the fierce opposition of Judaism, both in Palestine and elsewhere ; she triumphed by the force of her inherent and Divine vitality.

In Spite of Moral Corruption.

(*b*) But if success was not forced upon the Christian Church by the dispositions and attitude of Judaism, can it be said that Paganism supplies us with the true explanation of the triumph of the Gospel ? Modern unbelief complains that Paul has characterised the social morality of the Pagan world in terms of undue severity. Yet Paul does not exceed the specific charges of Tacitus, of Suetonius, of Juvenal, of Seneca, that is to say, of writers who, at least, had no theological interest in misrepresenting or exaggerating the facts which they deplore. When Tacitus summarises the moral condition of Paganism by his exhaustive phrase, "*corrumpere et corrumpi*,"* he more than covers the sorrowing invective of the apostle. In particular, the East, that very portion of the empire in which the Gospel took its rise, was the main source of the common infection. Antioch was itself a centre of moral putrefaction. Egypt was one of the most corrupt countries in the world, and the same account might be given generally of those districts and cities of the empire in which the Church first made her way, of Greece, and Asia Minor, and Roman Africa, of Ephesus and Corinth, of Alexandria and Carthage. "The middle of the first century of our era was, in point of fact, one of the worst epochs of ancient history."

* "To corrupt and be corrupted."

Christ Crucified the Power of God.

But was such an epoch, such a world, such a "civilisation" as this calculated to "force success" on an institution like "the Kingdom of Heaven," or on a doctrine such as that of the New Testament? What was the Gospel as it met the eye and fell upon the ear of Roman Paganism? "We preach," said the apostle, "Christ crucified; to the Jews an offence, and to the Greeks a folly." "I determined not to know anything among you Corinthians, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Here was a truth linked inextricably with other truths equally "foolish" in the apprehension of Pagan intellect, equally condemnatory of the moral degredation of Pagan life. In the preaching of the apostles, Jesus crucified confronted the intellectual cynicism, the social selfishness, and the sensualist degradation of the Pagan world. Was such a doctrine likely, of its own weight and without any assistance from on high, to win its way to acceptance? Is it not certain that debased souls are so far from aspiring naturally towards that which is holy, elevated, and pure that they feel towards it only hatred and repulsion? The habits and passions of the people were opposed to it; it threatened somewhat rudely to interfere with them. National feeling was opposed to it; it flattered no national self-love. Nay, religious feeling itself was opposed to it, for religious feeling had been enslaved by ancient falsehoods. There were worships, priesthoods, beliefs in long-established possession, and they were not likely to yield without a struggle. Before she could triumph in the western world the soil of the empire had to be reddened by Christian blood. Ignatius of Antioch given to the lions at Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna condemned to the flames, the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, and among them the tender Blandina, extorting by her fortitude the admiration of the very heathen; Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage conquering a mother's love by a stronger love for Christ. These are but samples of the "noble army" which vanquished heathendom.

Who Was It? What Was It in Him?

Who was He that had thus created a moral force which could embrace three centuries of a protracted agony, in

the confidence that victory would come at last? What was it in Him, so fascinating and sustaining to the thought of His followers, that for Him men and women of all ages and ranks in life gladly sacrificed all that is dearest to man's heart and nature? Was it only His miracles? Was it simply His character? But to understand a perfect character you must be attracted to it, and have some strong sympathies with it. Was it His teaching? True, never man spake like this Man; but taken alone, the highest and holiest teaching might have seemed to humanity to be no more than "the sound of one that had a pleasant voice, and could play well upon an instrument." His death? Certainly He predicted that in dying He would draw all men unto Him; but who was He that could thus turn the instrument of His humiliation into the certificate of His glory? His resurrection? His resurrection indeed was emphatically to be the reversal of a false impression, but it was to witness to a truth beyond itself; our Lord had expressly predicted that He would rise from the grave, and that His resurrection would attest His claims. None of these things taken separately will account for the power of Christ in history. In the convergence of all these; of these majestic miracles;[3] of that character which commands at once our love and our reverence; of that teaching, so startling, so awful, so searching, so tender; of that death of agony encircled with such a halo of moral glory; of that deserted tomb and the majestic splendour of the Risen One—a deeper truth, underlying all, justifying all, explaining all is seen to reveal itself. We discern, as did the first Christians, beneath and beyond all that meets the eye of sense and the eye of conscience, the Eternal Person of our Lord Himself. It is not the miracles, but the Worker; not the character, but its living Subject; not the teaching, but the Master; not even the death or the resurrection, but He who died and rose, upon whom Christian thought, Christian love, Christian resolution ultimately rest. The truth which really and only accounts for the establishment in this our human world of such a religion as Christianity, and of such an institution as the Church, is the truth that Jesus Christ was believed to be more than Man, the truth

that Jesus Christ is what men believed Him to be, the truth that Jesus Christ is God.

Napoleon's Estimate of Christ.

If the first Napoleon was not a theologian, he was at least a man whom vast experience had taught what kind of forces can really produce a lasting effect upon mankind, and under what conditions they may be expected to do so. A time came when the good Providence of God had chained down that great but ambitious spirit to the rock of St. Helena, and the conqueror of civilised Europe had leisure to gather up the results of his unparalleled life and to ascertain with an accuracy not often attainable by monarchs or warriors his own true place in history. When conversing, as was his habit, about the great men of the ancient world, and comparing himself with them, he turned, it is said, to Count Montholon with the inquiry, "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" The question was declined, and Napoleon proceeded, "Well, then, I will tell you. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him...I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man: none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man...I have inspired multitudes with such an enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me,...but to do this it was necessary that I should be *visibly* present with the electric influence of my looks, of my words, of my voice. When I saw men and spoke to them I lighted up the flame of self-devotion in their hearts...Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the Unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy; He asks for that which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart; He will have it entirely to Himself. He

demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted. Wonderful! In defiance of time and space the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in Him experience that remarkable supernatural love towards Him.

This Phenomenon is Unaccountable;

it is altogether beyond the scope of man's creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This is it which strikes me most; I have often thought of it. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ."

Here surely is the common sense of humanity. The victory of Christianity is the great standing miracle which Christ has wrought. Its significance is enhanced if the miracles of the New Testament are rejected, and if the apostles are held to have received no illumination from on high. Let those in our day who believe seriously that the work of Christ may be accounted for on natural and human grounds say who among themselves will endeavour to rival it. Who of our contemporaries will dare to predict that eighteen hundred years hence his ideas, his maxims, his institutions, however noble or philanthropic they may be, will still survive in their completeness and in their vigour?

The Only Explanation, Christ is the Creator.

Who can dream that his own name and history will be the rallying point of a world-wide interest and enthusiasm in some distant age? Who can suppose that beyond the political, the social, the intellectual revolutions which lie in the future of humanity he will himself still survive in the memory of men, not as a trivial fact of archæology, but as a moral power, as the object of a devoted and passionate affection? What man indeed that still retains, I will not say the faith of a Christian, but the modesty of a man of sense, must not feel that there is a literally infinite interval between himself and that majestic One who, in the words of Jean Paul Richter, "being the Holiest among the mighty,

and the Mightiest among the holy, has lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, has turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages ? "

The work of Jesus Christ is not merely a fact of history, it is a fact, blessed be God, of individual experience ! If the world is one scene of His conquests, the soul of each true Christian is another. There He is hailed, He is loved, He is worshipped as One who possesses a knowledge and a strength which human study and human skill fail to compass ; it is felt that He is so manifestly the true Saviour of the soul because He is none other than the Being who made it.

LECTURE IV.

Our Lord's Divinity as Witnessed by His Consciousness.

"The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a Man, makest Thyself God" (John 10. 33).

It is common with some modern writers to represent the questions at issue between the faith and its opponents, in respect of the Person of our Lord, as being substantially a question between the "historical spirit" and the spirit of dogmatism.

"You must choose," men seem to say, "between history and dogma; you must choose between history which can be verified and dogma which belongs to the sphere of inaccessible abstractions. You must make your choice, since the Catholic dogma of Christ's Divinity is pronounced by the higher criticism to be irreconcilable with the historical reality of the life of Jesus." And in answer to that challenge let us proceed, my brethren, to choose history, and as a result of that choice, if it may be, to maintain that the Christ of history is either the God whom we believers adore or that He is far below the assumed moral level of the mere man, whose character rationalism still, at least generally, professes to respect in the pages of its mutilated Gospel.

For let us observe that the Catholic doctrine has thus much in its favour—it takes for granted the only existing history of Jesus Christ. It is not compelled to mutilate or to enfeeble it, or to do it critical violence. It is in league with this history; it is at home, as is no other doctrine, in the pages of the evangelists.

Christ Transends the Rules and Bounds of the Universe.

Consider first of all the general impression respecting our Lord's Person, which arises upon a survey of the miracles ascribed to Him in all the extant accounts of His life. To a

thoughtful humanitarian who believes in the preternatural elements of the Gospel history our Lord's miracles, taken as a whole, must needs present an embarrassing difficulty. "Jesus," says a free-thinking writer, "does not merely exhibit the power of moral and mental superiority over common men; He upsets and goes beyond the rules and bounds of the order of the universe. A word from His mouth stills a tempest. A few loaves and fishes are fashioned by His almighty hand into an abundant feast, which satisfies thousands of hungry men. At His bidding life returns to inanimate corpses. By His curse a fig-tree which had no fruit on it is withered up." Such miracles belong, he contends, to that "torrent of legend" with which, according to the rationalistic creed, Jesus was surrounded after His death by the unthinking enthusiasm of His disciples. But then a question arises as to how much is to be included within this legendary "torrent." In particular, and above all else, is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave to be regarded as a part of its contributions to the life of Christ?

The Literal Truth of the Resurrection.

Paul, writing to a Gentile Church, expressly makes Christianity answer with its life for the literal truth of the resurrection. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain...Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Some modern writers would possibly have reproached Paul with offering a harsh alternative instead of an argument. But Paul would have replied, first, that our Lord's honour and credit were entirely staked upon the issue, since He had foretold His resurrection as the "sign" which would justify His claims; and secondly, that the fact of the resurrection was attested by evidence which must outweigh everything except an *à priori* conviction of the impossibility of miracle, since it was attested by the word of more than two hundred and fifty living persons who had actually seen the Risen Jesus. As to objections to miracle of an *à priori* character, Paul would have argued, as most Theists, and even the French philosopher have argued, that such objections could not

be urged by any man who believed seriously in a *living* God at all. But on the other hand, if the resurrection be admitted to be a fact, it is puerile to object to the other miracles of Jesus, or to any other Christian miracles, provided they be sufficiently attested.

The Proper Evidence of Miracles.

But if the miracles of Jesus be admitted in the block, as by a "rational" believer in the resurrection they must be admitted they do point, as I have said, to the Catholic belief, as distinct from any lower conceptions respecting the Person of Jesus Christ. They differ from the miracles of prophets and apostles in that, instead of being answers to prayer, granted by a Higher Power, they manifestly flow forth from the majestic life resident in the Worker. John accordingly calls them Christ's "works," meaning that they were just such acts as might be expected from Him, being such as He was. For our Lord's miracles are something more than evidences that He was the organ of a Divine revelation. They do not merely secure a deferential attention to His disclosures respecting the nature of God, the duty and destiny of man, His own Person, mission, and work Certainly they have this properly evidential force; He Himself appealed to them as having it. But it would be difficult altogether to account for their form, or for their varieties, or for the times at which they were wrought, or for the motives which were actually assigned for working them, on the supposition that their value was only evidential. They are like the kind deeds of the wealthy, or the good advice of the wise; they are like that debt of charity which is due from the possessors of great endowments to suffering humanity. Christ as Man owed this tribute of mercy which His Godhead had rendered it possible for Him to pay to those whom (such was His love) He was not ashamed to call His brethren. But besides this, Christ's miracles are physical and symbolic representations of His redemptive action as the Divine Saviour of mankind. Their form is carefully adapted to express this action. By healing the palsied, the blind, the lame, Christ clothed with a visible form His plenary power to cure spiritual diseases, such as

the weakness, the darkness, the deadly torpor of the soul. By casting out devils from the possessed He pointed to His victory over the principalities and powers of evil, whereby man would be freed from their thraldom and restored to moral liberty. By raising Lazarus from the corruption of the grave He proclaimed Himself not merely a Revealer of the resurrection, but the Resurrection and the Life itself.

They Manifest Forth His Mediatorial Glory.

In our Lord's miracles then we have before us something more than a set of credentials, since they manifest forth His mediatorial glory. They exhibit various aspects of that redemptive power whereby He designed to save lost man from sin and death ; and they lead us to study, from many separate points of view, Christ's majestic personality as the source of the various wonders which radiate from it. And assuredly such a study can have but one result for those who honestly believe in the literal reality of the wonders described ; it must force upon them a conviction of the Divinity of the Worker.

A Miracle at Entry and Exit of Christ.

But the miracles which especially point to the Catholic doctrine as their justification, and which are simply incumbrances blocking up the way of a humanitarian theorist, are those of which our Lord's Manhood is itself the subject. According to the Gospel narrative Jesus enters this world by one miracle and He leaves it by another. His human manifestation centres in that miracle of miracles, His resurrection from the grave after death. The resurrection is the central fact up to which all leads, and from which all radiates. Such wonders as Christ's birth of a virgin mother, His resurrection from the tomb, and His ascension into Heaven are not merely the credentials of our redemption they are distinct stages and processes of the redemptive work itself. Taken in their entirety they interpose a measureless interval between the life of Jesus and the lives of the greatest of prophets or of apostles, even of those to whom it was given to still the elements and to raise the

dead. To expel these miracles from the life of Jesus is to destroy the identity of the Christ of the Gospels ; it is to substitute a new christ for the Christ of Christendom. Who would recognise the true Christ in the natural son of a human father, or in the crucified prophet whose body has rotted in an earthly grave ? Yet on the other hand, who will not admit that He who was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin mother, who, after being crucified, dead, and buried, rose again the third day from the dead and then went up into Heaven before the eyes of His apostles, must needs be an altogether superhuman being ? The Catholic doctrine then is at home among the facts of the Gospel narrative by the mere fact of its proclaiming a superhuman Christ, while the modern Humanitarian theories are ill at ease among those facts. The four evangelists, amid their distinguishing peculiarities, concur in representing a Christ whose life is encased in a setting of miracles. The Catholic doctrine meets these representations more than half way ; they are in sympathy with, if they are not admitted to anticipate, its assertion. The Gospel miracles point at the very least to a Christ who is altogether above the range of human experience, and the creeds recognise and confirm this indication by saying that He is Divine. Thus

The Christ of Dogma is the Christ of History;

He is the Christ of the only extant history which describes the Founder of Christendom at all.

A neutral attitude towards the miraculous element in the Gospel history is impossible. The claim to work miracles is not the least prominent element of our Lord's teaching, nor are the miracles which are said to have been wrought by Him a fanciful or ornamental appendage to His action. The miraculous is inextricably interwoven with the whole life of Christ. The ethical beauty, nay, the moral integrity of our Lord's character is dependent, whether we will it or not, upon the reality of His miracles. It may be very desirable to defer as far as possible to the mental prepossessions of our time ; but it is not practicable to put asunder two things which God has joined together, namely,

the beauty of Christ's character and the *bonâ fide* reality of the miracles which He professed to work.

What Position did Jesus Claim?

But let us consider what is the real bearing of our Lord's moral character upon the question of His Divinity. In order to do this it is necessary to ask a previous question. What position did Jesus Christ, either tacitly or explicitly, claim to occupy in His intercourse with men? What allusions did He make to the subject of His personality? You will feel, my brethren, that it is impossible to overrate the solemn importance of such a point as this. We are here touching the very heart of our great subject: we have penetrated to the inmost shrine of Christian truth when we thus proceed to examine those words of the Gospels which exhibit the consciousness of the Founder of Christianity respecting His rank in the scale of being. With what awe, yet with what loving eagerness, must not a Christian enter on such an examination!

No reader of the Gospels can fail to see that, speaking generally and without reference to any presumed order of the events and sayings in the Gospel history, there are two distinct stages or levels in the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord.

TWO STAGES IN OUR LORD'S TEACHING.

I. Of these the first is mainly concerned with primary fundamental moral truth. It is in substance a call to repentance and the proclamation of a new life. It is summarised in the words, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." A change of mind, both respecting self and respecting God, was necessary before a man could lead the new life of the Kingdom of Heaven. Of this stage of our Lord's preaching the Sermon on the Mount is the most representative document. The Sermon on the Mount preaches penitence by laying down the highest law of holiness. Incidentally the Sermon on the Mount states certain doctrines, such as that of the Divine Providence, with great explicitness, but throughout it the moral element is predominant. This great discourse quickens and deepens

a sense of sin by presenting the highest ideal of an inward holiness. In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord is laying broad and deep the foundations of His spiritual edifice. A pure and loving heart; an open and trustful conscience; a freedom of communion with the Father of spirits; a love of man as man, the measure of which is to be nothing less than a man's love of himself; above all, a stern determination, at any cost, to be true, true with God, true with men, true with self—such are the prerequisites for genuine discipleship.

In this first stage of our Lord's teaching let us moreover note two characteristics.

Two Characteristics of the First Stage.

1. And first, that our Lord's recorded language is absolutely wanting in a feature, which, on the supposition of His being merely human, would seem to have been practically indispensable. Our Lord does not place before us any relative or lower standard of morals. He proposes the highest standard; He enforces the absolute morality. "Be ye therefore perfect," He says, "even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." Now in the case of a human teacher of high moral and spiritual attainments what should we expect to be a necessary accompaniment of this teaching? Surely we should expect some confession of personal unworthiness thus to teach. But Jesus Christ makes no approach to such a distinction between Himself and His message. He bids men be like God, and He gives not the faintest hint that any trace of unlikeness to God in Himself obliges Him to accompany the delivery of that precept with a protestation of His own personal unworthiness. Do you say that this is only a rhetorical style or mood derived by tradition from the Hebrew prophets, and natural in any Semitic teacher who aspired to succeed them? I answer that nothing is plainer in the Hebrew prophets than the clear distinction which is constantly maintained between the moral level of the teacher and the moral level of His message. The prophetic ambassador represents the invisible King of Israel; but the holiness of the King is never measured, never compromised by the

imperfections of His representative. The prophetic writings abound in confessions of weakness, in confessions of shortcomings, in confessions of sin. The greatest of the prophets is permitted to see the glory of the Lord, and he forthwith exclaims in agony, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

Christ Never Once Confesses Sin.

Yet Jesus Christ never once confesses sin; He never once asks for pardon. Is it not He who so sharply rebukes the self-righteousness of the Pharisee? Might He not seem to ignore all human piety that is not based upon a broken heart? Does He not deal with human nature at large as the true prodigal who must penitently return to a father's love as the one condition of its peace and bliss? Yet He Himself never lets fall a hint; He Himself never breathes a prayer which implies any, the slightest trace, of a personal remorse. From no casual admission do we gather that any, the most venial sin, has ever been His. Never for one moment does He associate Himself with any passing experience of that anxious dread of the penal future with which His own awful words must needs fill the sinner's heart. If His soul is troubled, at least His moral sorrows are not His own, they are a burden laid on Him by His love for others. Nay, He challenges His enemies to convince Him of sin. He declares positively that He does always the will of the Father (John 8. 46). Even when speaking of Himself as Man He always refers to eternal life as His inalienable possession. It might, so perchance we think, be the illusion of a moral dullness, if only He did not penetrate the sins of others with such relentless analysis. It might, we imagine, be a subtle pride if we did not know Him to be so unrivalled in His great humility. This consciousness of an absolute sinlessness in such a soul as that of Jesus Christ points to a moral elevation unknown to our actual human experience. It is, at the very least, suggestive of a relation to the perfect moral Being altogether unique in human history.

He Taught as One Having Authority.

2. The other characteristic of this stage of our Lord's teaching is the attitude which He at once and, if I may so say, naturally assumes, not merely towards the teachers of His time, but towards the letter of that older, divinely-given revelation which they preserved and interpreted. The people early remarked that Jesus "taught as One having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes reasoned, they explained, they balanced argument against argument, they appealed to the critical or verifying faculty of their hearers. But here is a Teacher who sees truth intuitively and announces it simply, without condescending to recommend it by argument. He is a Teacher, moreover, not of truth obvious to all, but of truth which might have seemed to the men who first heard it to be what we should call paradoxical. He condemns in the severest language the doctrine and the practice of the most influential religious authorities among His countrymen. He takes up instinctively a higher position than He assigns to any who had preceded Him in Israel. He passes in review and accepts or abrogates not merely the traditional doctrines of the Jewish schools, but the Mosaic law itself. His style runs thus: "It was said *to* them of old time,...but I say unto you" (Matt. 5. 27).

"Verily, I Say Unto You."

The prophets always appealed to a higher sanction; the prophetic argument addressed to the conscience of Israel was ever, "Thus saith the Lord." How significant, how full of import as to His consciousness respecting Himself, is our Lord's customary phrase, "Verily, I say unto you." What prophet ever set himself above the great Legislator, above the law written by the finger of God on Sinai? What prophet ever undertook to ratify the Pentateuch as a whole, to contrast his own higher morality with some of its precepts in detail, to imply even remotely that he was competent to revise that which every Israelite knew to be the handiwork of God? What prophet ever thus implicitly placed himself on a line of equality, not with Moses, not with Abraham, but with the Lord God Himself? So momentous a claim

requires explanation if the claimant be only human. This impersonation of the source of moral law must rest upon some basis : what is the basis on which it rests ?

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus Christ does not deign to justify His lofty critical and revisionary attitude towards the ancient law. He neither explains nor exaggerates His power to review the older revelation and to reveal new truth. He simply teaches, He abrogates, He establishes, He sanctions, He unfolds, as the case may be, and in a tone which implies that His right to teach is not a matter for discussion.

"Who is This Teacher?"

It was inevitable that the question should be asked, anxiously, earnestly, fiercely, " Who is this Teacher ? " I say it was inevitable, for if you teach the lowest moral truth in the humblest sphere your right to do so will sooner or later be called in question.

Picture to yourselves a teacher who is not merely under the official obligation to say something, but who is morally convinced that he has something to say. Imagine one who believes alike in the truth of his message and in the reality of his mission to deliver it. Let his message combine those moral contrasts which give permanency and true force to a doctrine, and which the Gospel alone has combined in their perfection. Let this teacher be tender, yet searching ; let him win the hearts of men by his kindly humanity, while he probes, aye to the quick, their moral sores. Let him be uniformly calm, yet manifestly moved by the fire of repressed passion. Let him be stern, yet not unloving, and resolute without sacrificing the elasticity of his sympathy, and genial without condescending to be the weakly accomplice of moral mischief. Let him pursue and expose the latent evil of the human heart through all the mazes of its unrivalled deceitfulness, without sullying his own purity, and without forfeiting his strong belief in the present capacity of every human being for goodness. Let him " know what is in man," and yet, with this knowledge clearly before him, let him not only not despair of humanity but respect it, nay, love it, even enthusiastically. Above

all, let this teacher be perfectly independent. Let him be independent to the voice of the multitude ; independent of the enthusiasm and promptings of his disciples ; independent even when face to face with the bitter criticism and scorn of his antagonists ; independent of all save God and his conscience. In a word, conceive a case in which moral authority and moral beauty combine to elicit a simultaneous tribute of reverence and of love. Clearly such a teacher must be a moral power ; and as a consequence his claim to teach must be scrutinised with a severity proportioned to the interest which he excites and to the hostility which he cannot hope to escape provoking. And such a Teacher, or rather more than this, was Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Self-Revelation of our Lord.

Nor is this all. The scrutiny which our Lord thus necessarily encountered from without was responded to, or rather it was anticipated, by self-discovery from within. "The soul," it has been said, "like the body, has its pores," and in a sincere soul the pores of its life are always open. Instinctively, unconsciously, and whether a man will or not, the insignificance or the greatness of the inner life always reveals itself. In our Lord this self-revelation was not involuntary, or accidental, or forced ; it was in the highest degree deliberate. He knew the thoughts of those about Him, and He anticipated their expression. He placed beyond a doubt, by the most explicit statements, that which might have been more than suspected if He had only preached the Sermon on the Mount.

THE SECOND STAGE—HE PREACHES HIMSELF.

II. It is characteristic then of what may be termed the second stage of our Lord's public teaching, that He distinctly, repeatedly, energetically preaches Himself. He does not leave men to draw inferences about Himself from the power of His moral teaching, or from the awe-inspiring nature of His miracles. He speaks of Himself as the Light of a darkened world (John 8. 12), as the Way by which man may ascend to Heaven (John 14. 6), as the Truth which can

really satisfy the cravings of the soul, as the Life which must be imparted to all who would live in very deed, to all who would really live for ever. Life is resident in Him in virtue of an undefined and eternal communication of it from the Father (John 5. 26). He is the Bread of Life (John 6. 35).

He is the Living Bread.

He is the Living Bread that came down from Heaven; believers in Him will feed on Him, and will have eternal life. He points to a living water of the Spirit which He can give, and which will quench the thirst of souls that drink it. All who came before Him He characterises as having been, by comparison with Himself, the thieves and robbers of mankind (John 10. 8). He is Himself the one Good Shepherd of the souls of men. He knows and He is known of His true sheep. Not only is He the Shepherd, He is the very Door of the sheepfold; to enter through Him is to be safe. He is the Vine, the Life-tree of regenerate humanity (John 15. 1). All that is truly fruitful and lovely in the human family must branch forth from Him; all spiritual life must wither and die if it be severed from His. He stands consciously between earth and Heaven. He claims to be the one means of real approach to the invisible God; no soul of man can come to the Father but through Him (John 14. 6). He promises that all prayer offered in His Name shall be answered: "If ye ask anything in My Name, I will do it" (John 14. 14). He contrasts Himself with a group of His countrymen as follows: "Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world" (John 8. 23). He anticipates His death, and foretells its consequences: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself" (John 12. 32).

He is the Resurrection and the Life.

He claims to be Lord of the realm of death; He will Himself wake the sleeping dead; all that are in the graves shall hear His voice (John 5. 28, 29); nay, He will raise Himself from the dead (John 2. 19). He proclaims, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11. 25). He encourages men to trust in Him as they trust in God (John 14. 1); to make Him an object of faith just as they believe in God (John

6. 29); to honour Him as they honour the Father (John 5. 23). To love Him is a necessary mark of the children of God: "If God were your Father, ye would have loved Me" (John 8. 42). It is not possible, He rules, to love God and yet to hate Himself: "He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also" (John 15. 23). The proof of a true love to Him lies in doing His bidding: "If ye love Me, keep *My* commandments" (John 14. 15).

The Discourse in the Supper-Room.

Of this second stage of our Lord's teaching the most representative document is the discourse in the supper-room. How great is the contrast between that discourse and the Sermon on the Mount! In the last discourse it is His Person rather than His teaching which is especially prominent; His subject in that discourse is Himself. Certainly He preaches Himself in His relationship to His redeemed; but still He preaches above all and in all, Himself. All radiates from Himself, all converges towards Himself. The sorrows and perplexities of His disciples, the mission and work of the Paraclete, the mingling predictions of suffering and of glory, are all bound up with the Person of Jesus, as manifested by Himself. In those matchless words all centres so consistently in Jesus, that it might seem that Jesus alone is before us; alone in the greatness of His supramundane glory; alone in bearing His burden of an awful, fathomless sorrow.

It will naturally occur to us that language such as that which has just been quoted is mainly characteristic of the fourth Gospel; and you will permit me, my brethren, to consider the objection which may underlie that observation somewhat at length in a future lecture. For the present the author of "Ecce Homo" may remind those who, for whatever reasons, refuse to believe Christ to have used these words, that "we cannot deny that He used words which have substantially the same meaning. We cannot deny that He called Himself King, Master, and Judge of men; that He promised to give rest to the weary and the heavy laden; that He instructed His followers to hope for life from feeding on His body and His blood."

Indeed so entirely is our Lord's recorded teaching penetrated by His self-assertion, that in order to represent Him as simply teaching moral truth, while keeping Himself strictly in the background of His doctrine, it would be necessary to deny the trustworthiness of all the accounts of His teaching which we possess. To recognise the difference which has been noticed between the two phases of His teaching merely amounts to saying that in the former His self-proclamation is implied, while it is avowed in the latter. For even in that phase of Christ's teaching which the three first evangelists more particularly record, the public assumption of titles and functions, such as those of King, Teacher, and Judge of the human race, implies those statements about Himself which are preserved in the fourth Gospel.

His Claim to Judge the World.

Consider, for instance, what is really involved in a claim to judge the world. That Jesus Christ did put forward this claim must be conceded by those who admit that we have in our hands any true records of Him whatever. Christ says that He will return to earth as Judge of all mankind. He will sit upon a throne of glory, and will be attended by bands of obedient angels. Before Him will be gathered all the nations of the world, and He will judge them. If it should be urged that our Lord is teaching truth in the garb of parable, and that His words must not be taken too literally, it may be answered that, supposing this to be the case (a supposition by no means to be conceded), the main features, the purport and drift of the entire representation cannot be mistaken. The Speaker claims to be Judge of all the world. Whenever, or however, you understand Him to exercise His function, Christ claims in that discourse to be nothing less than the Universal Judge. You cannot honestly translate His language into any modern and prosaic equivalent that does not carry with it this tremendous claim. Nor is it relevant to observe that Messiah had been pictured in prophecy as the Universal Judge, and that in assuming to judge the world Jesus Christ was only claiming an official consequence of the character

which He had previously assumed. Surely this does not alter the nature of the claim! It does indeed show what was involved in the original assertion that He was the Messiah; but it does not show that the title of Universal Judge was a mere idealist decoration having no practical duties attached to it. On the contrary, Jesus Christ asserts the practical value of the title very deliberately; He insists on and expands its significance; He draws out what it implies into a vivid picture.

The Claim Involves Deity.

He literally and deliberately put Himself forward as Judge of all the world; and the moral significance of this self-exaltation is not affected by the fact that He made it as a part of His general Messianic claim. If He could not claim to be Messiah without making it, He ought not to have claimed to be Messiah unless He had a right to make it. It may be pleaded that He Himself said that the Father had given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. But this, as has already been shown, means simply that He is the Universal Judge because He is Messiah. True, the chosen title of Messiahship implies His real humanity, and His human nature invests Him with special fitness for this as for the rest of His mediatorial work. But then the title Son of Man, as implying His humanity, is in felt contrast to a higher nature which it suggests. He is more than human; but He is to judge us, because He is also Man. On the whole it is impossible to reflect steadily on this claim of Jesus Christ without feeling that either such a claim ought never to have been made, or that it carries us forward irresistibly to a truth beyond an above itself.

His Dealing with Individuals.

In dealing with separate souls our Lord's tone and language are not less significant. He treats those who come to Him as literally belonging to Himself, in virtue of an existing right. He commands, He does not invite, discipleship. To Philip, to the sons of Zebedee, to the rich young man, He says simply, "Follow Me." In the same spirit

His apostles are bidden to resent resistance to their Master's doctrine : " When ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it : but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city." And as His message is to be received upon pain of eternal loss, so in receiving it men are to give themselves up to Him simply and unreservedly.

A Claim to Come First in our Affections.

No rival claim, however strong, no natural affection, however legitimate and sacred, may interpose between Himself and the soul of His follower. " He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." " If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Accordingly He predicts the painful severance between near relations which would accompany the advance of the Gospel : " Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, Nay ; but rather division : for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father ; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother ; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law " (Luke 12. 51-53). And the Gospel narrative itself furnishes us with a remarkable illustration of our Lord's application of His claim. " He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead : but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee ; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his

hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9. 59-62).

A Claim to Rule the Whole Soul.

It is impossible to ignore this imperious claim on the part of Jesus to rule the whole soul of man. Other masters may demand a man's active energies, or his time, or his purse, or his thought, or some large share in his affections. But here is a claim on the whole man, on his very inmost self, on the sanctities of his deepest life. Here is a claim which altogether sets aside the dearest ties of family and kindred, if perchance they interfere with it Does any who is merely man dare to advance such a claim as this? If so, is it possible that, believing Him to be only a fellow-creature, we can listen to the claim with respect, with patience, without earnest indignation? Do not our souls belong only and wholly to Him who made them? Can we not bury ourselves out of the sight and reach of every fellow-creature, in the hidden recesses of the spirit which we carry within? Can we not escape, if we will, from all eyes save One, from all wills save One, from all voices save One, from all beings excepting Him who gave us life? How then can we listen to the demand which is advanced by Jesus of Nazareth? Is it tolerable if He is only man? If He does indeed share with ourselves the great debt of creation at the hand of God; if He exists, like ourselves, from moment to moment merely upon sufferance; or rather, if He is upheld in being in virtue of a continuous and gratuitous ministration of life, supplied to Him by the Author of all life; is it endurable that He should thus assume to deal with us as His own creatures, as beings who have no rights before Him, and whom He may command at will? Doubtless He speaks of certain souls as given Him by His Father; but then He claims the fealty, the submission of all. And even if souls are only "given" to Christ, how are we to account for this absolute gift of an immortal soul to a human Lord?

The Supreme Lord of Life.

What, in short, is the real moral justification of a claim than which no larger could be urged even by the Creator? How can Christ bid men live for Himself as for the very end

of their existence? How can He rightly draw towards Himself the whole thought and love, I do not say of a world, but of one single human being, with this imperious urgency, if He be indeed only the Christ of the Humanitarian teachers, if He be anything else or less than the supreme Lord of life?

It is then not merely an easy transition, it is a positive moral relief, to pass from considering these statements and claims to the declarations in which Jesus Christ explains them by explicitly asserting His Divinity. For although the solemn sentences in which He makes that supreme revelation are comparatively few, it is clear that the truth is latent, in the entire moral and intellectual posture which we have been considering, unless we are prepared to fall back upon a fearful alternative which it will be my duty presently to notice.

Three Different Classes of Men.

Every man who takes a public or stirring part in life may assume that he has to deal with three different classes of men. He must face his personal friends, his declared opponents, and a large neutral body which is swayed by turns in the opposite directions of friendliness and opposition. Towards each of these classes he has varying obligations, and from their different points of view they form their estimate of his character and action. Now our Lord, entering as He did perfectly into the actual conditions of our human and social existence, exposed Himself to this triple scrutiny, and met it by a correspondingly threefold revelation. He revealed His Divinity to His disciples, to the Jewish people, and to His embittered opponents, the chief priests and Pharisees.

Revelation to His Friends.

Bearing in mind His acceptance of the confessions of Nathanael (John 1. 49), and of Peter (Matt. 16. 16), as well as His solemn words to Nicodemus (John 3. 18), let us consider His language in the supper-room to Philip. Philip preferred to our Lord the peremptory request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Well might the answer

have thrilled those who heard it. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (John 14. 9, 10). Now what this indwelling really implied is seen in our Lord's answer to a question of Jude. Jude had asked how it was that Christ would manifest Himself to His servants, and not to the world. Our Lord replies that the heavenly revelation is made to love; but the form in which this answer is couched is of the highest significance.

Deity Dwelling in Humanity.

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14. 23). "*We* will come unto him and make *our* abode!" Reflect: Who is this Speaker that promises to dwell in the soul of man? And with whom does He associate Himself? It may be true of any eminent saint that "God speaks not to him, as to one outside Himself; that God is in him; that he feels himself with God; that he draws from his own heart what he tells us of the Father; that he lives in the bosom of God by the intercommunion of every moment." But such a one could not forget that, favoured as he is by the Divine presence illuminating his whole inner life, he still lives at an immeasurable distance beneath the Being whose condescension has so enriched him. In virtue of his sanctity, he would surely shrink with horror from associating himself with God; from promising, along with God, to make a dwelling-place of the souls that love himself; from representing his presence with men as a blessing co-ordinate with the presence of the Father; from attributing to himself oneness of will with the will of God; from implying that side by side with the Father of spirits he was himself equally a ruler and a helper of the life of the souls of men.

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE JEWS.

The most prominent statements, however, which our Lord made on the subject of His Divinity occur in those conversations with the Jews which are specially recorded in the

fourth Gospel. Our Lord discovers this great truth to the Jewish people by three distinct methods of statements.

Claims Equality with the Father.

1. In the first place, He distinctly places Himself on terms of equality with the Father by a double claim. He claims a parity of working power, and He claims an equal right to the homage of mankind. This claim of an equality in working power with the Father is inseparable from our Lord's statements that He could confer animal life (John 5. 21), and that the future restoration of the whole human race to life would be effected by an act of His will (John 5. 28, 29). Our Lord had healed the impotent man on the Sabbath Day, and had bidden him take up his bed and walk. The Jews saw an infraction of the Sabbath, both in the command given to the impotent man and in the act of healing him. They sought to slay our Lord; but He justified Himself by saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work (John 5. 17). Therefore," continues the evangelist, "the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5. 18). Now the Jews were not mistaken as to our Lord's meaning. They knew that none could associate himself as did Jesus with this world-sustaining energy of God, who was not himself God. The Sabbath was a positive precept, but it rested on a moral basis. It had been given by God Himself. Our Lord claims a right to break the Sabbath, because God's ever active providence is not suspended on that day. Our Lord thus places both His will and His power on the level of the power and will of the Father. We make the same assertion in saying that whatsoever things the Father doeth, those things the Son also doeth in like manner (John 5. 19).

Claims Equal Honour with the Father.

Our Lord simply and directly asserts that the works of the Father, without any restriction, are, both as to their nature and mode of production, the works of the Son. For our Lord's real sense is made plain by His sub-

sequent statement that "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 22, 23). This claim is indeed no more than He had already advanced in bidding His followers trust Him and love Him. The obligation of honouring the Son is defined to be just as stringent as the obligation of honouring the Father. How fearful is such a claim if the Son be only human; how natural, how moderate, how just, if He is in very deed Divine!

An Equal Right to the Homage of Mankind.

2. Beyond this assertion of an equal operative power with the Father, and of an equal right to the homage of mankind, is our Lord's revelation of His absolute oneness of essence with the Father. The Jews gathered around Him at the Feast of Dedication in the porch of Solomon, and pressed Him to tell them whether He was the Christ or not. Our Lord referred them to the teaching which they had heard, and to the miracles which they had witnessed in vain; but He proceeded to say that there were docile and faithful souls whom He terms His "sheep," and whom He "knew," while they too understood and followed Him. He goes on to insist upon the blessedness of these His true followers. With Him they were secure; no power on earth or in Heaven could "pluck them out of His hand." A second reason for the blessedness of His sheep follows: "My Father which gave them Me is a greater power than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." In these words our Lord repeats His previous assurance of the security of His sheep, but He gives a different reason for it. He had represented them as "in His own hand;" He now represents them as in the hand of the Almighty Father. How does He consolidate these two reasons which together assure His "sheep" of their security? By distinctly asserting His own oneness with the Father:

"I and My Father are One Thing."

His words gave fair ground for saying that "being Man, He made Himself God" (John 10. 33). Now if our Lord had been in reality only man, He might have

been fairly expected to say so. Whereas He proceeds, as was often His wont, to reason with His opponents upon their own real or assumed grounds, and so to bring them back to a point at which they were forced to draw for themselves the very inference which had just roused their indignation. With this view our Lord points out the application of the word Elohim to the wicked judges under the Jewish theocracy in the eighty-second Psalm. (Psa. 82. 6). Surely, with this authoritative language before their eyes, His countrymen could not object to His calling Himself the Son of God. And yet He irresistibly implies that His title to Divinity is higher than, and indeed distinct in kind from, that of the Jewish magistrates. If the Jews could tolerate that ascription of a lower and relative divinity to the corrupt officials who, theocratically speaking, represented the Lord Jehovah; surely, looking to the witness of His works, Divinity could not be denied to One who so manifestly wielded Divine power as did Jesus (John 10. 37, 38). Our Lord's argument is thus *à minori ad majus*,* and He arrives a second time at the assertion which had already given such offence to His countrymen, and which He now repeats in terms expressive of His sharing not merely a dynamical but an essential unity with the Father : " The Father is in Me, and I in Him." What the Father is to the Son, the Son is to the Father.

Our Lord expresses this truth of His wielding the power of the Father by asserting His identity of nature with the Father, which involves His Omnipotence. And the Jews understood Him. He had not retracted what they accounted blasphemy, and they again endeavoured to take His life. The motive of their indignation was not disowned by Him. They believed Him to mean that He was Himself a Divine Person, and He never repudiated that construction of His language.

Was the Lord Conscious of Pre-existence?

3. In order, however, to determine the real sense of our Saviour's claim to be one with the Father, let us ask a simple question. Does it appear that He is recorded to

* "From the lesser to the greater."

have been conscious of having existed previously to His human life upon this earth ?

Let us then listen to Him as He is proclaiming to His countrymen in the temple, " If a man keep *My* saying, He shall never see death " (John 8. 52). The Jews exclaim that by such an announcement He assumes to be greater than Abraham and the prophets. They indignantly ask, " Whom makest Thou Thyself ? " Here as elsewhere our Lord keeps both sides of His relation to the Eternal Father in full view ; it is the Father that glorifies His Manhood, and the Jews would glorify Him, too, if they were the Father's true children. But it was not their Heavenly Father alone with whom the Jews were at variance.

He was Before Abraham.

The earthly ancestor of the Jewish race might be invoked to rebuke his recreant posterity. " Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Abraham had seen the day of Messiah by the light of prophecy, and accordingly this statement was a claim on the part of Jesus to be the true Messiah. Of itself such a claim would not have shocked the Jews ; they would have discussed it on its merits. They had latterly looked for a political chief, victorious but human, in their expected Messiah ; they would have welcomed any prospect of realising their expectations. But they detected a deeper and to them a less welcome meaning in the words of Christ. He had meant, they thought, by His " Day," something more than the years of His human life. At any rate they would ask Him a question which would at once justify their suspicions or enable Him to clear Himself. " Thou," they said to Him, " art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham ? " Now if our Lord had only claimed to be a human Messiah, such as the Jews of later years had learned to look for, He must have earnestly disavowed any such interference from His words. He might have replied that if Abraham saw Him by the light of prophecy this did not of itself imply that He was Abraham's contemporary, and so that He had Himself literally seen Abraham. But His actual answer more than justified the most extreme

suspicions of His examiners as to His real meaning. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I *am*." In these tremendous words the Speaker institutes a double contrast, in respect both of the duration and the mode of His existence, between Himself and the great ancestor of Israel. Abraham, then, had come into existence at some given point of time. Abraham did not exist until his parents gave him birth. But "I am."

He Unveils a Consciousness of Eternal Being.

Here is simple existence, with no note of beginning or end (John 8. 58). Our Lord says not, "Before Abraham was, I was," but "*I am*." He claims pre-existence indeed, but He does not merely claim pre-existence; He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as One on whom time has no effect, and for whom it has no meaning. He is the I AM of ancient Israel; He knows no past, as He knows no future; He is unbeginning, unending Being; He is the eternal "Now." This is the plain sense of His language, and perhaps the most instructive commentary upon its force is to be found in the violent expedients to which humanitarian writers have been driven in order to evade it.

Here again the Jews understood our Lord and attempted to kill Him; while He, instead of explaining Himself in any sense which would have disarmed their anger, simply withdrew from the temple.

He Came Down from Heaven.

With this statement we may compare Christ's references to His pre-existence in His two great sacramental discourses. Conversing with Nicodemus He describes Himself as the Son of Man who had come down from Heaven, and who while yet speaking was in Heaven (John 3. 13). Preaching in the great synagogue of Capernaum, He calls Himself "the Bread of Life which had come down from Heaven." He repeats and expands this description of Himself. His pre-existence is the warrant of His life-giving power (John 6. 33). The Jews objected that they knew His father and mother, and did not understand His advancing any such, claim as this to a pre-existent life. Our Lord replied by

saying that no man could come to Him unless taught of God to do so, and then proceeded to reassert His pre-existence in the same terms as before. He pursued His former statement into its mysterious consequences. Since He was the Heaven-descended Bread of Life, His flesh was meat indeed and His blood was drink indeed. They only would have life in them who should eat His flesh and drink this blood. Life eternal, resurrection at the last day, and His own presence even now within the soul would follow upon a due partaking of that heavenly food.

Would Ascend where He was Before.

When the disciples murmured at this as a "hard saying," our Lord met their objections by predicting His coming ascension into Heaven as an event which would justify His allusions to His pre-existence, no less than to the life-giving virtue of His Manhood. "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" Again, the reality of our Lord's pre-existence lightens up such mysterious sayings as the following: "I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go;" "I am from above: . . . I am not of this world;" "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins;" "I proceeded forth and came from God;" "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." Once more, how full of solemn significance is that reference to "the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" in the great intercession which our Incarnate Saviour offered to the Eternal Father on the eve of His agony!

He Made Himself the Son of God.

If indeed, in His dealings with the multitude, our Lord had been really misunderstood, He had a last opportunity for explaining Himself when He was arraigned before the Sanhedrin. Nothing is more certain than that, whatever was the dominant motive that prompted our Lord's apprehension, the Sanhedrin condemned Him because He claimed Divinity. The members of the court stated this before Pilate. "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die,

because He made Himself the Son of God." Their language would have been meaningless if they had understood by the "Son of God" nothing more than the ethical or theocratic Sonship of their own ancient kings and saints. If the Jews held Christ to be a false Messiah, a false prophet, a blasphemer, it was because He claimed literal Divinity. True, the Messiah was to have been Divine. But the Jews had secularised the Messianic promises; and the Sanhedrin held Jesus Christ to be worthy of death under the terms of the Mosaic law, as expressed in Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Lev. 24. 16; Deut. 13. 5). After the witnesses had delivered their various and inconsistent testimonies, the high priest arose and said, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy" (Matt. 26. 63-65).

The "Son of Man" in Daniel was Divine.

The blasphemy did not consist, either in assumption of the title Son of Man, or in the claim to be Messiah, or even, excepting indirectly, in that which by the terms of Daniel's prophecy was involved in Messiahship, namely, the commission to judge the world. It was the further claim to be the Son of God, not in any moral or theocratic, but in the natural sense, at which the high priest and his coadjutors professed to be so deeply shocked. The Jews felt, as our Lord intended, that the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy could not but be Divine; they knew what He meant by appropriating such words as applicable to Himself. Just as one body of Jews had endeavoured to destroy Jesus when He called God His Father in such sense as to claim Divinity; and another when He contrasted His Eternal Being with the fleeting life of Abraham in a distant past; and another when He termed Himself Son of God, and associated Himself with His Father as being dynamically and so substantially One—just as they murmured at His pretension to "have come down from Heaven," and

detected blasphemy in His authoritative remission of sins—so when, before His judges, He admitted that He claimed to be the Son of God, all further discussion was at an end.

The Issue at His Trial. His Claim to Godhead.

The high priest exclaimed, "Ye have heard His blasphemy;" and they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. And a very accomplished Jew, M. Salvador, has shown that this question of our Lord's Divinity was the real point at issue in that momentous trial. He maintains that a Jew had no logical alternative to belief in the Godhead of Jesus Christ except the imperative duty of putting Him to death.

THE CHARACTER OF OUR LORD.

III. In order to do justice to the significance of our Lord's language about Himself, let us for a moment reflect on our very fundamental conceptions of His character. There is indeed a certain seeming impropriety in using that word "character" with respect to Jesus Christ at all. For in modern language "character" generally implies the predominance or the absence of some side or sides of that great whole which we picture to ourselves in the background of each individual man as the true and complete ideal of human nature. This predominance or absence of particular traits or faculties, this precise combination of active or of passive qualities, determines the moral flavour of each individual life, and constitutes character. Character is that whereby the individual is marked off from the presumed standard or level of typical manhood. Yet the closest analysis of the actual human life of Jesus reveals a moral portrait not only unlike any that men have witnessed before or since, but especially remarkable in that it presents an equally balanced and entirely harmonious representation of all the normal elements of our perfected moral nature. Still, we may dare to ask the question: What are the features in that perfectly harmonious moral life, upon which the reverence and the love of Christians dwells most constantly, most thankfully, most enthusiastically?

The Sincerity of Christ.

1. If then on such a subject I may utter a truism without irreverence, I say first of all that Jesus Christ was *sincere*. He possessed that one indispensable qualification for any teacher, specially for a teacher of religion : He believed in what He said, without reserve ; and He said what He believed, without regard to consequences. It is easy to denounce the errors of men who oppose us ; but it is difficult to be always perfectly outspoken with those who love us, or who look up to us, or whose services may be of use to us, and who may be alienated by our outspokenness. Now Jesus Christ does not merely drag forth to the light of day the hidden motives of His powerful adversaries that He may exhibit them with so mercifully implacable an accuracy in all their baseness and pretension. He exposes, with equal impartiality, the weakness, or the unreality, or the self-deception of others who already regard Him with affection or who desire to espouse His cause. A disciple addresses Him as " Good Master." The address was in itself sufficiently justifiable ; but our Lord observed that the speaker had used it in an unreal and conventional manner. In order to mark His displeasure He solemnly asked, " Why callest thou Me good ? There is none good but One, that is God." A multitude which He has fed miraculously returns to seek Him on the following day ; but instead of silently accepting this tacit proof of His popular power He observes, " Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." On another occasion, we are told, " there went great multitudes with Him." He turns, warns them that all human affections must be sacrificed to His service, and that none could be His disciple who does not take up the cross. He solemnly bids men " count the cost " before they " build the tower " of discipleship. He is on the point of being deserted by all, and an apostle protests with fervid exaggeration that he is ready to go with Him to prison or to death. But our Lord, instead of at once welcoming the affection which dictated this protestation, pauses to show Simon Peter how little he really knew of the

weakness of his own heart. With the woman of Samaria, with Simon the Pharisee, with the Jews in the temple, with the rich young man, it is ever the same ;

Christ Cannot Flatter, He Cannot Disguise.

He cannot but set forth truth in its limpid purity. Such was His moral attitude throughout ; sincerity was the mainspring of His whole thought and action, and when He stood before His judges, He could exclaim, in this as in a wider sense, " To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Surely this sincerity of our Holy Saviour is even at this hour a main secret of His attractive power. Could we conceive of Him as false, He would no longer be Himself in our thought ; He would not be changed, He would simply have disappeared.

The Unselfishness of Christ.

2. A second moral truism : Jesus Christ was *unselfish*. His life was a prolonged act of self-sacrifice, and sacrifice of self is the practical expression and measure of unselfishness. It might have seemed that where there was no sin to be curbed or worn away by sorrow and pain, there room might have been found for a lawful measure of self-satisfaction. But " even Christ pleased not Himself." He " sought not His own glory ; " " He came not to do His own will." His body and His soul, with all the faculties, the activities, the latent powers of each were offered to the Divine will. His friends, His relatives, His mother and His home, His pleasure, His reputation, His repose, were all abandoned for the glory of God and for the good of His brethren. His self-sacrifice included the whole range of His human thought and affection and action ; it lasted throughout His life ; its highest expression was His death upon the Cross. It is this complete renunciation of all that has no object beyond self which has won to Jesus Christ the heart of mankind. In Jesus Christ we hail the One Friend who loves perfectly ; who expresses perfect love by the utter surrender of self ; who loves even unto death. In Jesus Christ we greet the Good Shepherd under whose

care we can lack nothing, and whose glory it is that He "giveth His life for the sheep."

The Humility of Christ.

3. A third moral truism: Jesus Christ was *humble*. He might have appeared, even to human eyes, as "One naturally contented with obscurity; wanting the restless desire for eminence and distinction which is so common in great men; hating to put forward personal claims; disliking competition and disputes who should be greatest; . . . fond of what is simple and homely, of children, and poor people." It might have almost seemed as if His preternatural powers were a source of distress and embarrassment to Him, so eager was He to economise their exercise and to veil them from the eyes of men. He was particularly careful that His miracles should not add to His reputation. Again and again He very earnestly enjoined silence on those who were the subjects of His miraculous cures. He would not gratify persons whose motive in seeking His company was a vain curiosity to see the proofs of His power.

The Philosophers of Old Never Humble.

By this humility is Jesus Christ most emphatically distinguished from the philosophers of the ancient world. Whatever else they may have been, they were not humble. But Jesus Christ loses His individuality if you separate Him in thought for one moment from His "great humility." His humility is the key to His whole life; it is the measuring-line whereby His actions, His sufferings, His words, His very movements must be meted in order to be understood. "Learn of Me," He says, "for

I am Meek and Lowly of Heart;

and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

But what becomes of these integral features of His character if, after considering the language which He actually used about Himself, we should go on to deny that He is God?

Was He Really Humble?

Is He, if He be not God, really humble? Is that reiterated self-assertion, to the accents of which we have

been listening this morning, consistent with any known form of creaturely humility? Can Jesus thus bid us believe in Him, love Him, obey Him, live by Him, live for Him; can He thus claim to be the universal Teacher and the universal Judge, the Way, the Truth, the Life of humanity—if He be indeed only man?

Was He Really Unselfish?

If Jesus Christ be not God, is He really unselfish? He bids men make Himself the centre of their affections and their thoughts; and when God does this He is but recalling man to that which is man's proper duty, to the true direction and law of man's being. But deny Christ's Divinity, and what will you say of the disinterestedness of His perpetual self-assertion? If Jesus was merely man, and His death no more than the fitting close, the supreme effort of a life consistently devoted to the assertion of self, has He not "succeeded beyond the dreams of the most delirious votary of fame? If the blood of a merely human Christ was the price which was deliberately paid for glory on Mount Calvary, then it is certain that the sufferer has had his reward. But at least he died, only as others have died, who have sought and found at the hands of their fellowmen, in death as in life, a tribute of sympathy, of admiration, of honour. And we owe to such a sufferer nothing beyond the compassionate silence wherewith charity would fain veil the violence of selfishness, robed in her garments, and seeking to share her glory and her power, while false to the very vital principle which makes her what she is."

Was He Truly Sincere?

Once more, if Jesus Christ is not God, can we even say that He is sincere? Let us suppose that it were granted, as it is by no means granted, that Jesus Christ nowhere asserts His literal Godhead. Let us suppose that He was after all merely man, and had never meant to do more than describe, in the language of mysticism, the intertwining of His human soul with the Spirit of God in a communion so deep and absorbing as to obliterate His sense of distinct human personality. Let this I say be supposed to have

been His meaning, and let His sincerity be taken for granted. Who then shall anticipate the horror of His soul or the fire of His words when He is once made aware of the terrible misapprehension to which His language has given rise in the minds around Him? "Thou being a man, makest Thyself God." The charge was literally true: being human, He did make Himself God. Christians believe that He only "made" Himself that which He is. But if He is not God, where does He make any adequate repudiation of a construction of His words so utterly derogatory to the great Creator, so necessarily abhorrent to a good man's thought?

The Terrible Alternative!

The choice really lies between the hypothesis of conscious and culpable insincerity, and the belief that Jesus speaks literal truth and must be taken at His word.

Of a truth the alternative before us is terrible; but can devout and earnest thought falter for a moment in the agony of its suspense? Surely it cannot. The moral character of Christ, viewed in connection with the preternatural facts of His human life, will bear the strain which the argument puts upon it. It is easier to believe that God has consummated His works of wonder and of mercy by a crowning self-revelation in which mercy and beauty reach their climax than to close the moral eye to the brightest spot that meets it in human history, and to see at last in man's inexplicable destiny only the justification of his despair. Yet the true alternative to this frightful conclusion is in reality a frank acceptance of the doctrine which is under consideration in these lectures. For Christianity, both as a creed and as a life, depends absolutely upon the personal character of its Founder. Unless His virtues were only apparent, unless His miracles were nothing better than a popular delusion, we must admit that His self-assertion is justified, even in the full measure of its blessed and awful import. We must deny the antagonism which is said to exist between the doctrine of Christ's Divinity and the history of His human manifestation. We must believe and confess that the Christ of history is the Christ of the Catholic creed.

We Must Either "Despise" or "Worship."

Eternal Jesus! it is Thyself who hast thus bidden us either despise Thee or worship Thee. Thou wouldst have us despise Thee as our fellow man if we will not worship Thee as our God. Gazing on Thy human beauty, and listening to Thy words, we cannot deny that Thou art the only Son of God Most High; disputing Thy Divinity, we could no longer clearly recognise Thy human perfections. But if our ears hearken to Thy revelations of Thy greatness, our souls have already been won to Thee by Thy truthfulness, by Thy lowliness, and by Thy love. Convinced by these Thy moral glories, and by Thy majestic exercise of creative and healing power, we believe and are sure that Thou hast the words of eternal life. Although in unveiling Thyself before Thy creatures Thou dost stand from age to age at the bar of hostile and sceptical opinion, yet assuredly from age to age, by the assaults of Thine enemies no less than in the faith of Thy believing Church, Thou art justified in Thy sayings and art clear when Thou art judged. Of a truth, Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ; Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father.

LECTURE V.

The Doctrine of Christ's Divinity in the Writings of John.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life (for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (1 John 1. 3).

We may perhaps have wondered how a Galilean fisherman could have been the author of a subtle and sublime theosophy. The answer is that John knew from experience the blessed and tremendous truth that his Lord and Friend was a Divine Person. Apart from the guidance of the blessed Spirit, John's mental strength and refinement may be traced to the force of his keen interest in this single fact. Just as a desperate moral or material struggle brings to light forces and resources unused before, so an intense religious conviction fertilises intellect and develops speculative talent, not unfrequently in the most unlearned. Every form of thought which comes even into indirect contact with the truth to which the soul clings adoringly is scanned by it with deep and anxious interest, whether it be the interest of hope or the interest of apprehension. John certainly is a theosophic philosopher, but he is only a philosopher because he is a theologian; he is such a master of abstract thought because he is so devoted to the Incarnate God. The fisherman of Galilee could never have written the prologue of the fourth Gospel, or have guided the religious thought of Ephesus, unless he had clung to this sustaining truth, which makes him at once so popular and so profound. For

John is Spiritually as Simple as he is Intellectually Majestic.

In this our day he is understood by the religious insight of the unlettered and the poor, while the learned can

sometimes see in him only the weary repetition of metaphysical abstractions. The poor understand this sublime revelation of God, the Creator of the world, as pure light and truth. They understand the picture of a moral darkness which commits and excuses sin, and which hates the light. They receive gratefully and believingly the Son of God, made Man and conquering evil by the laying down of His life. They follow with the experience of their own temptations, or sins, or hopes, or fears, those heart-searching conversations with Nicodemus, with the Samaritan woman, with the Jews. In truth, John's language and, above all, the words of Christ in John are as simple as they are profound. They still speak peace and joy to little children; they are still a stumbling-block to, and a condemnation of, the virtual successors of Cerinthus.

"THE WORD WAS GOD."

I. If there were nothing else to the purpose in the whole of the New Testament, those first fourteen verses of the fourth Gospel would suffice to persuade a believer in Holy Scripture of the truth that Jesus Christ is absolutely GOD. The prologue is itself the beginning of the history. "It is impossible," says Baur, "to deny that 'the Word made flesh' is one and the same subject with the Man Christ Jesus on the one hand, and with the Word who 'was in the beginning, who was with God, and who was God,' on the other."

Taking then the prologue of John's Gospel in connection with the verses which immediately succeed it, let us observe that John attaches to our Lord's Person two names which together yield a complete revelation of His Divine glory. Our Lord is called the "Word" and the "Only-begotten Son." It is doubtless true, as Neander observes, that "the first of these names was" put prominently forward at Ephesus, "in order to lead those who busied themselves with speculations on the Logos as the centre of all theophanies, from a mere religious idealism to a religious realism, to lead them in short to a recognition of God revealed in Christ."

By the word Logos, then, John carries back his history of

our Lord to a point at which it has not yet entered into the sphere of sense and time. "In the four Gospels," says Augustine, "or rather in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle John, deservedly compared to an eagle by reason of his spiritual understanding, has lifted his enunciation of truth to a far higher and sublimer point than the other three, and by this elevation he would fain have our hearts lifted up likewise. For the other three Evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as Man. Of His Godhead they said but a few things. But John, as if he found it oppressive to walk on earth, has opened his treatise as it were with a peal of thunder; he has raised himself not merely above the earth, and the whole compass of the air and Heaven, but even above every angel-host, and every order of the invisible powers, and has reached even to Him by whom all things were made in that sentence, 'In the beginning was the Word.'"

When Time was Not.

Instead of opening his narrative at the human birth of our Lord, or at the commencement of His ministry, John places himself in thought at the starting-point (as we should conceive it) of all time. Nay, rather it would seem that if "In the beginning," at the beginning of Genesis, signifies the initial moment of time itself, ἐν ἀρχῇ* rises to the absolute conception of that which is anterior to, or rather independent of, time. Then, when time was not, or at a point to which man cannot apply his finite conception of time, there was—the Logos or Word. When as yet nothing had been made He *was*. What was the *Logos*? Such a term, in a position of such moment when so much depends on our rightly understanding it, has a moral no less than an intellectual claim upon us of the highest order. We are bound to try to understand it, just as certainly as we are bound to obey the command to love our enemies. No man who carries his morality into the sphere of religious thought can affect or afford to maintain that the fundamental idea in the writings of John is a scholastic conceit with which practical Christians need not concern themselves.

* Translated "In the beginning" in John 1. 1.

And indeed John's doctrine of the Logos has from the first been scrutinised anxiously by the mind of Christendom. It could not but be felt that the term Logos denotes at the very least something intimately and everlastingly present with God; something as internal to the Being of God, as thought is to the soul of man. In truth, the Divine Logos is

God Reflected in His Own Eternal Thought;

in the Logos God is His own object. This infinite thought, the reflection and counterpart of God, subsisting in God as a Being or Hypostasis, and having a tendency to self-communication, such is the Logos. The Logos is the thought of God, not intermittent and precarious like human thought, but subsisting with the intensity of a personal form. The very expression seems to court the argument of Athenagoras, that since God could never have been ἄλογος,* the Logos must have been not created but eternal. It suggests the further inference that since reason is man's noblest faculty, the uncreated Logos must be at least equal with God. In any case it might have been asked why the term was used at all if these obvious inferences were not to be deduced from it; but as a matter of fact they are not mere inferences, since they are warranted by the express language of John. John says that the Word was "in the beginning." The question then arises: What was His relation to the self-existent Being? He was not merely παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ † (John 17. 5), along with God, but πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.‡ This last preposition expresses, beyond the fact of co-existence or immanence, the more significant fact of perpetuated intercommunion. The face of the everlasting Word, if we may dare so to express ourselves, was ever *directed towards* the face of the everlasting Father. But was the Logos then an independent being, existing externally to the one God? To conceive of an independent being, anterior to creation, would be an error at issue with the first truth of monotheism; and therefore Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόλος. § The Word is

* Without the Word.
† "Beside Thee" (God), translated "with Thee" in John 17. 5.
‡ "Towards God," translated "with God" in John 1. 1.
§ "The Word was God."

not merely a Divine Being, but He is in the absolute sense God. Thus from His eternal existence we ascend first to His distinct Personality and then to the full truth of His substantial Godhead.

Yet the Logos necessarily suggests to our minds the further idea of communicativeness; the Logos is speech as well as thought. And of His actual self-communication John mentions two phases or stages; the first *creation*, the second *revelation*. The Word unveils Himself to the soul through the mediation of objects of sense in the physical world, and He also unveils Himself immediately. Accordingly John says that "all things were made" by the Word, and that the Word who creates is also the Revealer: "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." He possesses δόξα,* that is, in John, the totality of the Divine attributes. This "glory" is not merely something belonging to His essential nature, since He allows us to behold it through His veil of flesh.

A THREEFOLD ASPECT.

What indeed this glory was we may observe by considering that John's writings appear to bring God before us, at least more particularly, under a threefold aspect.

God is Life.

1. God is Life. The Father is "living" (John 6. 57); He "has life in Himself" (John 5 26). God is not merely the living God, that is, the real God, in contrast to the non-existent and feigned deities of the heathen: God is life, in the sense of self-existent Being; He is the focus and the fountain of universal life. In Him life may be contemplated in its twofold activity, as issuing from its source, and as returning to its object. The life of God passes forth from itself; it lavishes itself throughout the realms of nothingness; it summons into being worlds, systems, intelligences, orders of existences unimagined before. In doing this it obeys no necessary law of self-expansion, but pours itself forth with that highest generosity that belongs

* Translated always "glory."

to a perfect freedom. That is to say, that God the life, is God the Creator. On the other hand, God is Being returning into itself, finding in itself its perfect and consummate satisfaction. God is thus the object of all dependent life; He is indeed the object of His own life; all His infinite powers and faculties turn ever inward with uncloyed delight upon Himself as upon their one adequate end or object. We cannot approach more nearly to a definition of pleasure than by saying that it is the exact correspondence between a faculty and its object. Pleasure is thus a test of vitality; and God, as being life, is the one Being who is supremely and perfectly happy.

God is Love.

2. Again, God is Love (1 John 4. 8). Love is the relation which subsists between God and all that lives as He has willed. Love is the bond of the Being of God. Love binds the Father to that only Son whom He has begotten from all eternity (John 3. 35). Love itself knows no beginning; it proceeds from the Father and the Son from all eternity. God loves created life, whether in nature or in grace; He loves the race of men, the unredeemed world (John 3. 16); He loves Christians with a special love (John 14. 23; 16. 27). In beings thus external to Himself God loves the life which He has given them; He loves Himself in them; He is still Himself the ultimate, rightful, necessary object of His love. Thus love is of His essence; it is the expression of His necessary delight in His own existence.

God is Light.

3. Lastly, God is Light. That is to say, He is absolute intellectual and moral truth; He is truth in the realms of thought, and truth in the sphere of action. He is the all-knowing and the perfectly Holy Being. No intellectual ignorance can darken His all-embracing survey of actual and possible fact; no stain can soil His robe of awful sanctity. Light is not merely the sphere in which He dwells: He is His own sphere of existence; He is Himself light, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1. 5).

These three aspects of the Divine nature, denoted by the terms Life, Love, and Light, are attributed in John's writings with abundant explicitness to the Word made flesh.

Christ is Light—Love—Life.

Thus, the Logos is light. He is *the* light; that is, the light which is the very essence of God. The Baptist indeed preaches truth; but the Baptist must not be confounded with the light which he heralds. The Logos is the true light (John 1. 9). All that has really enlarged the stock of intellectual truth or of moral goodness among men, all that has ever lighted any soul of man has radiated from Him. He proclaims Himself to be the light of the world and the truth, and His Apostle, speaking of the illumination shed by Him upon the Church, reminds Christians that "the darkness is passing, and the true light now shineth."

The Logos is love. He refracts upon the Father the fullness of His love (John 14. 31). He loves the Father as the Father loves Himself. The Father's love sends Him into the world, and He obeys out of love. It is love which draws Him together with the Father to make His abode in the souls of the faithful.

The Logos is life. He is the life (John 11. 25), the eternal life (1 John 5. 20), *the* life which is the essence of God. It has been given Him to have life in Himself, as the Father has life in Himself (John 5. 26). He can give life; nay, life is so emphatically His prerogative gift, that He is called the Word of Life (1 John 1. 1).

But, as has been already abundantly implied, the Word is also the Son. As applied to our Lord, the title "Son of God" is protected by epithets which sustain and define its unique significance. In the synoptic Gospels Christ is termed the "well-beloved" Son (Matt. 3. 17). In Paul He is God's "own" Son (Rom. 8. 32). In John He is the only begotten Son, or simply the only begotten (John 1. 14). This last epithet surely means, not merely that God has no other such Son, but that His only begotten Son is, in virtue of this Sonship, a partaker of that incommunicable and imperishable essence which is sundered from all created life by an impassable chasm.

Yet the bare metaphors of "Word" and "Son," taken separately, might lead divergent thinkers to conceive of Him to whom they are applied; on the one side as an impersonal quality or faculty of God on the other; as a concrete and personal but inferior and dependent being. But combine them, and each corrects the possible misuse of the other. The Logos, who is also the Son, cannot be an impersonal and abstract quality, since such an expression as the Son would be utterly misleading unless it implied at the very least the fact of a personal subsistence distinct from that of the Father. On the other hand, the Son, who is also the Logos, cannot be of more recent origin than the Father, since the Father cannot be conceived of as subsisting without that eternal thought or reason which is the Son. Nor may the Son be deemed to be in any respect, save in order of Divine subsistence, inferior to the Father, since He is identical with the eternal intellectual life of the Most High. Thus each together reinforces, supplements, and protects the other. Taken together they exhibit Christ before His incarnation as at once personally distinct from, and yet equal with, the Father; He is that personally subsisting and "Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (John 1. 2).

The Manifestation of Eternal Life.

John's Gospel is a narrative of that manifestation. It is a life of the eternal Word *tabernacling* in human nature among men. The Hebrew schools employed a similar expression to designate the personal presence of the Divinity in this finite world. In John's Gospel the personality of Christ makes itself felt as eternal and Divine at wellnigh every step of the narrative. Thus even the forerunner describes a Being who appearing later in time has had an earlier existence (John 1. 15), and who, while coming from above, is yet "above all" (John 3. 31). Each discourse, each miracle, nay, each separate word and act, is a fresh ray of glory streaming forth from the Person of the Word through the veil of His assumed humanity. The miracles of the Word incarnate are frequently called His works.

The Real Marvel would be if the Incarnate Being Should Work No Miracles.

The evangelist means to imply that "the wonderful is only the natural form of working for Him in whom all the fullness of God dwells." Christ's Divine nature must of necessity bring forth works greater than the works of man. The incarnation is the one great wonder; other miracles follow as a matter of course. The real marvel would be if the Incarnate Being should work no miracles; as it is, they are the natural results of His presence among men, rather than its higher manifestation. His true glory is not perceived except by those who gaze at it with a meditative and reverent intentness. The Word incarnate is ever conscious of His sublime relationship to the Father. He knows whence He is (John 8. 14). He refers not unfrequently to His pre-existent life (John 3. 13; 6. 62; 8. 58; 16. 28; 17. 5). He sees into the deepest purposes of the human hearts around Him (John 2. 24; 4. 17; 5. 14, 42; 6. 15). He has a perfect knowledge of all that concerns God (John 8. 55; 10. 15). His works are simply the works of God (John 9. 4; 10. 37, sqq.; 14. 10). To believe in the Father is to believe in Him. To have seen Him is to have seen the Father. To reject and hate Him is to reject and hate the Father. He demands at the hands of men the same tribute of affection and submission as that which they owe to the Person of the Father.

Incarnation and Unassailable Glory.

In John's Gospel the Incarnation is exhibited, not as the measure of the humiliation of the eternal Word, but as the veil of His enduring and unassailable glory. The angels of God ascend and descend upon Him. Nay, He is still in Heaven. Certainly He has taken an earthly form; He has clothed Himself with a human frame. But He has thereby raised humanity rather than abased Himself. In John the intrinsic humiliation of Christ's incarnate life is thrown into the background of the reader's thought. The narrative is throughout illuminated by the never-failing presence of the Word in His glory. Even when Jesus dies,

His death is no mere humiliation ; His death is the crisis of His exaltation, of His glory (John 12. 23).

THE ETERNAL WORD HISTORICALLY MANIFEST.

II. 1. But does John's teaching in his earlier writings on the subject of our Lord's Person harmonise with the representations placed before us in the fourth Gospel ? The opening words of his first Epistle might go far to answer that question. John's position in this Epistle is that the eternal immaterial Word of Life resident in God had become historically manifest, and that the Apostles had consciously seen, and heard, and handled Him, and were now publishing their experience to the world. The practical bearing of this announcement lay in the truth that " he that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life." For " God hath given to us the Eternal Life, and this, the Life, is in His Son." If then the soul is to hold communion with God in the Life of Light and Righteousness and Love, it must be through communion with His Divine Son. Thus all practically depends upon the attitude of the soul towards the Son. Accordingly, " whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father ; " while on the other hand, whosoever sincerely and in practice acknowledges the Son of God in His historical manifestation enjoys a true communion with the life of God. " Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

John's picture of Christ's work in this first Epistle leads us up to the culminating statement that Jesus Himself is the true God and the Eternal Life (1 John 5. 20). Throughout this Epistle the Apostle has been writing to those " who believe on the Name of the Son of God," that is to say, on the Divine nature of Jesus which the verbal symbol guards and suggests. Throughout this Epistle John's object has been to convince believers that by that faith they had eternal life, and to force them to be true to it.

Christ as Revealed in the Apocalypse.

2. This ethical reflection of the doctrine of God manifest in the flesh is perhaps mainly characteristic of John's first

Epistle ; but it is not wanting in the Apocalypse. The representation of the Person of our Saviour in the Apocalypse is independent of any indistinctness that may attach to the interpretation of the historical imagery of that wonderful book. In the Apocalypse Christ is the First and the Last ; He is the Alpha and the Omega ; He is the Eternal ; He is the Almighty (Rev. 1. 8). He possesses the seven spirits or perfections of God (Rev. 3. 1). He has a mysterious Name which no man knows save He Himself (Rev. 19. 12). His Name is written on the foreheads of the faithful (Rev. 3. 12) ; He is the giver of grace and victory (Rev. 22. 21). In the Apocalypse His Name is called the Word of God (Rev. 19. 13) ; as in the first Epistle He is the Word of Life, and in the Gospel the Word in the beginning. As He rides through Heaven on His errand of triumph and of judgment, a Name is written on His vesture and on His thigh ; He is " King of kings, and Lord of lords " (Rev. 19. 16). John had leaned upon His breast at supper in the familiarity of trusted friendship. John sees Him but for a moment in His supramundane glory, and forthwith falls at His feet as dead (Rev. 1. 17). In the Apocalypse especially we are confronted with the startling truth that the Lord of the unseen world is none other than the Crucified One (Rev. 12. 10). The armies of Heaven follow Him, clothed as He is in a vesture dipped in blood, at once the symbol of His passion and of His victory (Rev. 19. 13, 14). But of all the teachings of the Apocalypse on this subject perhaps none is so full of significance as the representation of Christ in His wounded humanity upon the throne of the Most High. The Lamb, as it had been slain, is in the very centre of the court of Heaven ; He receives the prostrate adoration of the highest intelligences around the throne ; and as the Object of that solemn, uninterrupted, awful worship, He is associated with the Father as being in truth One with the Almighty, Uncreated, Supreme God (Rev. 5. 13).

THE GOSPEL AND THE APOCALYPSE.

III. Whatever, then, may have been the interval between the composition of the Apocalypse and that of the

fourth Gospel, we find in the two documents one and the same doctrine, in substance if not in terms, respecting our Lord's eternal Person ; and further, this doctrine accurately corresponds with that of John's first Epistle. But it may be asked whether John, thus consistent with himself upon a point of such capital importance, is really in harmony with the teaching of the earlier Evangelists ? It is granted that between John and the three first Gospels there is a broad difference of characteristic phraseology, of the structure, scene, and matter of the several narratives. Does this difference strike deeper still ? Is the Christology of the son of Zebedee fundamentally distinct from that of his predecessors ? Can we recognise the Christ of the earlier Evangelists in the Christ of John ?

The Same Christ in all Four Gospels.

Now it is obvious to remark that the difference between the three first Evangelists and the fourth, in their respective representations of the Person of our Lord, is in one sense, at anyrate, a real difference. There is a real difference in the point of view of the writers, although the truth before them is one and the same. Each from his own standpoint, the first three Evangelists seek and portray separate aspects of the human side of the life of Jesus. They set forth His perfect Manhood in all its regal grace and majesty, in all its human sympathy and beauty, in all its healing and redemptive virtue. In one Gospel Christ is the true Fulfiller of the Law, and withal, by a touching contrast, the Man of Sorrows. In another He is the Lord of Nature and the Leader of Men ; all seek Him ; all yield to Him ; He moves forward in the independence of majestic strength. In a third He is active and all-embracing compassion ; He is the Shepherd who goes forth as for His life-work to seek the sheep that was lost ; He is the Good Samaritan. Thus the obedience, the force, and the tenderness of His humanity are successively depicted ; but room is left for another aspect of His life, differing from these and yet in harmony with them. If we may dare so to speak, the synoptists approach their great Subject from without, John unfolds it from within. John has been guided to pierce the veil

of sense ; he has penetrated far beyond the human features, nay, even beyond the human thought and human will of the Redeemer, into the central depths of His eternal personality. He sets forth the life of our Lord and Saviour on the earth, not in any one of the aspects which belong to it as human, but as being the consistent and adequate expression of the glory of a Divine Person, manifested to men under a visible form. The miracles described, the discourses selected, the plan of the narrative are all in harmony with the point of view of the fourth Evangelist, and it at once explains and accounts for them.

The Deity of Christ Taught in the Synoptists.

Yet it should be added that the synoptists do teach the Divine nature of Jesus, although in the main His sacred Manhood is most prominent in their pages. Moreover, the fourth Gospel, as has been noticed, abundantly insists upon Christ's true humanity. By laying such persistent stress upon Christ's Godhead, as the true seat of His personality, the fourth Gospel is doctrinally complemental (how marvellous is the complement !) to the other three ; and yet these three are so full of suggestive implications that they practically anticipate the higher teaching of the fourth.

The Title Son of God.

1. For in the synoptic Gospels Christ is called the Son of God in a higher sense than the ethical or than the theocratic. In the Old Testament an anointed king or a saintly prophet is a son of God. Christ is not merely one among many sons. He is the Only, the well-beloved Son of the Father. His relationship to the Father is unshared by any other, and is absolutely unique. It is indeed probable that of our Lord's contemporaries many applied to Him the title " Son of God " only as an official designation of the Messiah ; while others used it to acknowledge that surpassing and perfect character which proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth to be the one Son, who had appeared on earth worthily showing forth the moral perfections of our Heavenly Father. But the official and ethical senses of the term are rooted in a deeper sense, which Luke connects with it at

the beginning of his Gospel. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," so ran the angel-message to the virgin mother, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35). This may be contrasted with the prediction respecting John the Baptist, that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. John then is in existence before his sanctification by the Holy Spirit; but Christ's humanity itself is formed by the agency of the Holy Ghost. In like manner Matthew's record of the angel's words asserts that our Lord was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. But Matthew's reference to the prophetic Name Emmanuel points to the full truth, that Christ is the Son of God as being of the Divine essence.

The Son of the Highest.

2. Indeed the whole history of the nativity and its attendant circumstances guards the narratives of Matthew and Luke against the inroads of Humanitarian interpreters. The worship of the Infant Christ in Matthew by the wise men, in Luke by the shepherds of Bethlehem, represents Jesus as the true Lord of humanity, whether Jewish or Gentile, whether educated or unlettered. Especially noteworthy are the greetings addressed to the mother of our Lord by heavenly as well as earthly visitants. The Lord is with her; she is graced and blessed among women. Her Son will be great; He will be called the Son of the Highest; His Kingdom will have no end. Elizabeth echoes the angel's words; Mary is blessed among women, and the Fruit of her womb is blessed. Elizabeth marvels that such a one as herself should be visited by the Mother of her Lord.

The evangelical canticles, which we owe to the third Gospel, remarkably illustrate the point before us. They surround the cradle of the Infant Saviour with the devotional language of ancient Israel, now consecrated to the direct service of the Incarnate Lord. Mary, the virgin mother, already knows that all generations shall call her blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things unto her.

And as the moral and social fruits of the Incarnation unfold themselves before her prophetic eye, she proclaims that the promises to the forefathers are at length fulfilled, and that God, "remembering His mercy, hath holpen His servant Israel." Zacharias rejoices that the Lord God of Israel has in the new-born Saviour redeemed His people. This Saviour is the Lord, whose forerunner has been announced by prophecy; He is the Day-star from on high, bringing a new morning to those who sat in the darkness and death shadows of the world. Simeon desires to depart in peace, since his eyes have seen his Lord's Salvation. The humble Babe whom the old man takes in his arms belongs not to the lowly scenes of Bethlehem and Nazareth; He is the destined inheritance of the world. He is the Divine Saviour; all nations are interested in His birth; He is to shed light upon the heathen; He is to be the pride and glory of the New Israel.

The accounts then of our Lord's birth in two of the synoptic Evangelists, as illustrated by the sacred songs of praise and thanksgiving which Luke has preserved, point clearly to the entrance of a superhuman Being into this our human world.

In His Work and Teaching.

3. If the synoptists are in correspondence with John's characteristic doctrine when they describe our Lord's nativity and its attendant circumstances, that correspondence is even more obvious in their accounts of His teaching and in the pictures which they set before us of His life and work. They present Him to us mainly, although not exclusively, as the Son of Man. As has already been hinted, that title, besides its direct signification of His true and representative humanity, is itself the "product of a self-consciousness for which the being human is not a matter of course, but something secondary and superinduced." In other words, this title implies an original nature to which Christ's humanity was a subsequent accretion, and in which His true and deepest consciousness, if we may dare so to speak, was at home. Thus, often in the synoptic Gospels He is called simply the Son. He is the true Son of Man,

but He is also the true Son of God. In Him Sonship attains its archetypal form; in Him it is seen in its unsullied perfection. Accordingly He never calls the Father *our* Father, as if He shared His Sonship with His followers. He always speaks of *My* Father (Matt. 18. 10, 19, 35; 20. 23; 26. 53). To this Divine Sonship He received witness from Heaven, both at His baptism and at His transfiguration. In the parable of the vineyard the prophets of the old theocracy are contrasted with the Son, not as predecessors or rivals, but as slaves (Matt. 21. 34). Thus He lives among men as the one true Son of His Father's home. He is alone free by birthright among a race of born slaves. Yet instead of guarding His solitary dignity with jealous exclusiveness, He vouchsafes to raise the slaves around Him to an adopted sonship; He will buy them out of bondage by pouring forth His blood; He will lay down His life, that He may prove the generosity of His measureless love towards them (Matt. 20. 28).

The Central Figure in the Parables.

The synoptic Gospels record parables in which Christ is Himself the central Figure. They record miracles which seem to have no ascertainable object beyond that of exhibiting the superhuman might of the Worker. They tell us of His claim to forgive sins, and that He supported this claim by the exercise of His miraculous powers (Matt. 9. 2-6). Equally with John they represent Him as claiming to be not merely the Teacher, but the Object of His religion. He insists on faith in His own Person (Matt. 16. 16, 17). He institutes baptism, and He deliberately inserts His own Name between that of the Father and that of the Spirit (Matt. 28. 19). Such self-intrusion into the sphere of Divinity would be unintelligible if the synoptists had really represented Jesus as only the Teacher and Founder of a religious doctrine or character. But if Christ is the Logos in John, in these Gospels He is the Sophia* (Luke 7. 35). Thus He ascribes to Himself the exclusive knowledge of the Highest. No statement in John really goes beyond the terms in which, according to two synoptists, He claims

* Wisdom.

to know and to be known of the Father. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 27). Here then is a reciprocal relationship of equality: the Son alone has a true knowledge of the Father; the Son is Himself such that the Father alone understands Him. In these Gospels, moreover, Christ ascribes to Himself sanctity; He even places Himself above the holiest thing in ancient Israel (Matt. 12. 6). He and His people are greater than the greatest in the old covenant (Matt. 11. 11; 12. 41, 42; 21. 33). He scruples not to proclaim His consciousness of having fulfilled His mission. He asserts that all power is committed to Him both on earth and in Heaven (Matt. 11. 27). All nations are to be made disciples of His religion (Matt 28. 19).

The Absolute Good and the Absolute Truth.

When we weigh the language of the first three Evangelists, it will be found that Christ is represented by it as the Absolute Good and the Absolute Truth not less distinctly than in John. It is on this account that He is exhibited as in conflict, not with subordinate or accidental forms of evil, but with the evil principle itself, with the prince of evil (Luke 10. 18). And, as the Absolute Good, Christ tests the moral worth or worthlessness of men by their acceptance or rejection, not of His doctrine, but of His Person. It is Matthew who records such sentences as the following: "Neither be ye called masters; for One is your Master, even Christ;" "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me;" "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father;" "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and I will give you rest;" "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me." In Matthew then Christ speaks as One who knows Himself to be a universal and infallible Teacher in spiritual things; who demands submission of all men, and at whatever cost or sacrifice; who offers to mankind those deepest consolations which are sought from all others in vain. Nor is it otherwise with Luke and Mark. It is

indeed remarkable that our Lord's most absolute and peremptory claims to rule over the affections and wills of men are recorded by the first and third, and not by the fourth Evangelist. These royal rights over the human soul can be justified upon no plea of human relationships between teacher and learner, between child and elder, between master and servant, between friend and friend. If the title of Divinity is more explicitly put forward in John, the rights which imply it are insisted on in words recorded by the earlier Evangelists. The synoptists represent our Lord, who is the Object of Christian faith no less than the Founder of Christianity, as designing the whole world for the field of His conquests (Matt. 28. 19), and as claiming the submission of every individual human soul. All are to be brought to discipleship. Only then will the judgment come, when the Gospel has been announced to the whole circle of the nations (Matt. 14. 24). Christ, the Good and the Truth Incarnate, must reign throughout all time (Luke 22. 69). He knows, according to the synoptists no less than John, that He is a perfect and final Revelation of God. He is the centre point of the history and of the hopes of man. None shall advance beyond Him; the pretension to surpass Him is but the symptom of disastrous error and reaction (Matt. 24. 23-26).

Christ and the Transfiguration.

The Transfiguration is described by all the synoptists, and it represents our Lord in His true relation to the legal and prophetic dispensations, and as visibly invested for the time being with a glory which was rightfully His. The Ascension secures His permanent investiture with that glory, and the Ascension is described by Mark and Luke. The Resurrection is recorded by the first three Evangelists as accurately as by the fourth; and it was to the Resurrection that He Himself appealed as being the sign by which men were to know His real claim upon their homage. In the first three Gospels all of Christ's humiliations are consistently linked to the assertion of His power, and to the consummation of His victory. He is buffeted, spat upon, scourged, crucified, only to rise from the dead the

third day; His Resurrection is the prelude to His ascent to Heaven. He leaves the world, yet He bequeaths the promise of His presence. He promises to be wherever two or three are gathered in His Name; He institutes the sacrament of His body and His blood; He declares that He will be among His people even to the end of the world.

The Synoptists and the Judgment.

4. But it is more particularly through our Lord's discourses respecting the end of the world and the final judgment, as recorded by the synoptists, that we may discern the matchless dignity of His Person. It is reflected in the position which He claims to fill with respect to the moral and material universe, and in the absolute finality which He attributes to His religion. The Lawgiver who is above all other legislators, and who revises all other legislation, will also be the final Judge (Matt. 7. 22). At that last awful revelation of His personal glory none shall be able to refuse Him submission. Then will He put an end to the humiliations and the sorrows of His Church; then, out of the fullness of His majesty, He will clothe His despised followers with glory; He will allot the Kingdom to those who have believed on Him, and at His heavenly board they shall share for ever the royal feast of life. Certainly the Redeemer and Judge of men, to whom all spiritual and natural forces, all earthly and Heavenly powers must at last submit, is not merely a divinely gifted prophet. His Person "has a metaphysical and cosmical significance." None could preside so authoritatively over the history and destiny of the world who was not entitled to share the throne of its Creator.

In the synoptic Gospels, then, the Person of Christ, divine and human, is the centre point of the Christian religion. Christ is here the supreme Lawgiver; He is the perfect Saint; He is the Judge of all men. He controls both worlds, the physical and the spiritual; He bestows the forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit; He promises everlasting life. His presence is to be perpetuated on earth, while yet He will reign as Lord of Heaven.

CHRIST NOT A "DOUBLE BEING."

IV. But what avails it, say you, to show that John is consistent with himself, and that he is not really at variance with the Evangelists who preceded him, if the doctrine which he teaches, and which the Creed reasserts, is itself incredible? You object to this doctrine that it "involves an invincible contradiction." It represents Christ on the one hand as a personal Being, while on the other it asserts that two mutually self-excluding essences are really united in Him. How can He be personal, you ask, if He be in very truth both God and Man? If He is thus God and Man is He not, in point of fact, a "double Being," and is not unity of being an indispensable condition of personality? Surely, you insist, this condition is forfeited by the very terms of the doctrine. Christ either is not both God and Man, or He is not a single personality. To say that He is one Person in two natures is to affirm the existence of a miracle which is incredible, if for no other reason simply on the score of its unintelligibility.

Christ is One Person—God and Man.

This is what may be said; but let us consider, first of all, whether to say this does not, however unintentionally, caricature the doctrine of John and of the Catholic Creed. Does it not seem as if both John and the Creed were at pains to make it clear that the Person of Christ in His pre-existent glory, in His state of humiliation and sorrow, and in the majesty of His mediatorial Kingdom is continuously, unalterably one? Does not the Nicene Creed, for instance, first name the only begotten Son of God, and then go on to say how for us men and for our salvation He was Himself made Man and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate? Does not John plainly refer to one and the same Agent in such verses as the following? "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made;" "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." If John or the Creed had proceeded

to introduce a new subject to whom the circumstances of Christ's earthly life properly belonged, and who only maintained a mysterious, even although it were an indissoluble connection with the eternal Word in Heaven, then the charge of making Christ a "double Being" would be warrantable. Nestorius was fairly liable to that charge. He practically denied that the Man Christ Jesus was one Person with the eternal Word. In order to heighten the ethical import of the human life of Christ, Nestorianism represents our Lord as an individual Man, who, although He is the temple and organ of the Deity to which He is united, yet has a separate basis of personality in His human nature. The individuality of the Son of Mary is thus treated as a distinct thing from that of the eternal Word; and the Christ of Nestorianism is really a "double Being," or rather He is two distinct persons, mysteriously joined in one. But the Church has formally condemned this error, and in so doing she was merely throwing into the form of a doctrinal proposition the plain import of the narrative of John's Gospel.

He is Not Two, but One Christ.

Undoubtedly, you reply, the Church has not allowed her doctrine to be stated in terms which would dissolve the Redeemer into two distinct agents, and would so altogether forfeit the reality of redemption. But the question is whether the orthodox statement be really successful in avoiding the error which it deprecates. Certainly the Church does say that "although Christ be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ." But is this possible? How can Godhead and Manhood thus coalesce without forfeiture of that unity which is a condition of personality?

The answer to this question lies in the fact, upon which John insists with such prominence, that our Lord's Godhead is the seat of His personality. The Son of Mary is not a distinct human person mysteriously linked with the Divine nature of the eternal Word. The Person of the Son of Mary is divine and eternal; it is none other than the Person of the Word. When He took upon Him to deliver man the eternal Word did not abhor the virgin's womb. He clothed

Himself with man's bodily and man's immaterial nature; He united it to His own Divinity. Thus to speak of Christ as *a* Man, at least without explanation, may lead to a serious misconception; He is *the* Man, or rather He is Man. Christ's Manhood is not of itself an individual being; it is not a seat and centre of personality; it has no conceivable existence apart from the act whereby the eternal Word in becoming incarnate called it into being and made it His own. It is a vesture which He has folded around His Person; it is an instrument through which He places Himself in contact with men, and whereby He acts upon humanity. He wears it in Heaven and, thus robed in it, He represents, He impersonates, He pleads for the race of beings to which it belongs. In saying that Christ "took our nature upon Him" we imply that His Person existed before, and that the Manhood which He assumed was itself impersonal. Therefore He did not make Himself a "double Being" by becoming incarnate. His Manhood no more impaired the unity of His Person than each human body, with its various organs and capacities, impairs the unity of that personal principle which is the centre and pivot of each separate human existence, and which has its seat within the soul of each one of us.

Not a Second Personality.

"As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." As the personality of man resides in the soul, after death has severed soul and body, so the Person of Christ had its eternal seat in His Godhead before His incarnation. Intimately as the "I," or personal principle within each of us, is associated with every movement of the body, the "I" itself resides in the soul. The soul is that which is conscious, which remembers, which wills, and which thus realises personality. Certainly it is true that in our present state of existence we have never as yet realised what personal existence is apart from the body. But the youngest of us will do this ere many years have passed. Meanwhile we know that, when divorced from the personal principle which rules and inspires it, the body is but a lump of lifeless clay. The body then does not

superadd a second personality to that which is in the soul. It supplies the personal soul with an instrument ; it introduces it to a sphere of action ; it is the obedient slave, the plastic ductile form of the personal soul which tenants it. The hand is raised, the voice is heard ; but these are acts of the selfsame personality as that which, in the invisible recesses of its immaterial self, goes through intellectual acts of inference, or moral acts of aversion or of love. In short, man is at once animal and spirit, but his personal unity is not thereby impaired : and Jesus Christ is not other than a single Person, although He has united the perfect nature of man to His divine and eternal Being. Therefore, although He says " I and the Father are One," He never says " I and the Son " or " I and the Word are One." For He is the Word ; He is the Son. And His human life is not a distinct self, but a living robe which, as it was created, was forthwith wrapped around His eternal personality.

An Illustration from Romans VII.

Yet in taking upon Him a human will, the eternal Word did not assume a second principle of action which was destructive of the real unity of His Person. Within the precincts of a single human soul may we not observe two principles of volition, this higher and that lower, this animated almost entirely by reason, that as exclusively by passion ? Paul has described the moral dualism within a single will which is characteristic of the regenerate life in a wonderful passage in his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. 7. 14-25). The real self is loyal to God ; yet the Christian sees within him a second self, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to that which his central being, in its loyalty to God, energetically rejects (Rom. 7. 17, 22, 23). Yet in this great conflict between the old and the new self of the regenerate man, there is, we know, no real schism of an indivisible person, although for the moment antagonist elements within the soul are so engaged as to look like separate hostile agencies. The man's lower nature is not a distinct person, yet it has what is almost a distinct will,

and what is thus a shadow of the created will which Christ assumed along with His human nature. Of course in the Incarnate Christ the human will, although a proper principle of action, was not, could not be, in other than the most absolute harmony with the will of God. Christ's sinlessness is the historical expression of this harmony. The human will of Christ corresponded to the eternal will with unvarying accuracy; because in point of fact God, incarnate in Christ, willed each volition of Christ's human will. Christ's human will then had a distinct existence, yet its free volitions were but the earthly echoes of the will of the All-holy.

At the Temptation and in Gethsemane

it was confronted with the personal principle of evil; but the Tempter without was seconded by no pulse of sympathy within. The human will of Christ was incapable of willing evil. In Gethsemane it was thrown forward into strong relief as Jesus bent to accept the chalice of suffering from which His human sensitiveness could not but shrink. But from the first it was controlled by the Divine will to which it is indissolubly united; just as, if we may use the comparison, in a holy man, passion and impulse are brought entirely under the empire of reason and conscience. As God and Man our Lord has two wills; but the Divine will originates and rules His action; the human will is but the docile servant of that will of God which has its seat in Christ's Divine and eternal Person. Here indeed we touch upon the line at which revealed truth shades off into inaccessible mystery. We may not seek to penetrate the secrets of that marvellous *θεανδρικὴ ἐνέργεα*:* but at least we know that each nature of Christ is perfect, and that the Person which unites them is one and indissoluble.

We do not profess to solve the mystery of that union between the Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent Being, and a human life, with its bounded powers, its limited knowledge, its restricted sphere. We only know that in Christ the finite and the infinite are thus united. But we can understand this mysterious union at least as well as we can understand the union of such an organism as the

* The working of One who is both Divine and Human.

human body to a spiritual immaterial principle like the human soul.

If we reject the self-revelation of the Almighty God in the Person of Jesus Christ on the ground of our inability to understand the difficulties, great and undeniable, although not greater than we might have anticipated, which do in fact surround it, are we also prepared to conclude that because we cannot explain how a spiritual principle like the soul can be robed in and act through a material body we will therefore close our eyes to the arguments which certify us that the soul is an immaterial essence, and take refuge from this oppressive sense of mystery in some doctrine of consistent materialism ?

DIFFICULTIES OF THOSE WHO REJECT HIS DEITY.

V. But if belief in our Lord's Divinity, as taught by John, cannot be reasonably objected to on such grounds as have been noticed, can it be destroyed by a natural explanation of its upgrowth and formation ? Here, undoubtedly, we touch upon a suspicion which underlies much of the current scepticism of the day, and with a few words on this momentous topic we may conclude the present lecture.

Those who reject the doctrine that Christ is God are confronted by the consideration that, after the lapse of eighteen centuries since His appearance on this earth, He is believed in and worshipped as God by a Christendom which embraces the most civilised portion of the human family. The question arises how to account for this fact. There is no difficulty at all in accounting for it if we suppose Him to be, and to have proclaimed Himself to be, a Divine Person. But if we hold that, as a matter of history, He believed Himself to be a mere man, how are we to explain the world-wide upgrowth of so extraordinary a belief about Him, as is this belief in His Divinity ? Scepticism may fold its arms and may smile at what it deems the intrinsic absurdity of the dogma believed in, but it cannot ignore the existing prevalence of the belief which accepts the dogma. The belief is a phenomenon which at least chal-

lenges attention. How has that belief been spread ? How is it that for eighteen hundred years, and at this hour, a conviction of the truth of the Godhead of Jesus dominates over the world of Christian thought ? Here, if scepticism would save its intellectual credit, it must cease from the perpetual reiteration of doubts and negations, unrelieved by any frank assertions or admissions of positive truth. It must make a venture ; it must commit itself to the responsibilities of a positive position, however inexact and shadowy ; it must hazard an hypothesis and be prepared to defend it.

The Theory of Deification by Enthusiasm.

Accordingly the theory which proposes to explain the belief of Christendom in the Godhead of Christ maintains that Christ was " deified " by the enthusiasm of His first disciples. We are told that " man instinctively creates a creed that shall meet the wants and aspirations of his understanding and of his heart." The teaching of Christ created in His first followers a passionate devotion to His Person, and a desire for unreserved submission to His dictatorship. " So mighty was the enthusiasm that nothing short of that stupendous belief would satisfy it. The heart of Christendom gave law to its understanding. Christians wished Christ to be God, and they forthwith thought that they had sufficient reasons for believing in His Godhead. At length fathers and councils had finished their graceless and pedantic task, and that which had at first been the fresh sentiment of simple and loving hearts was duly hardened and rounded off into a solid block of repulsive dogma."

The Most Intimate Disciple.

Now John's writings are a standing difficulty in the way of this enterprising hypothesis. The fourth Gospel must be recognised as John's, unless, to use the words of Ewald, " we are prepared knowingly to receive falsehood and to reject truth." But we have also seen that in the fourth Gospel Jesus Christ is proclaimed to be God by the whole drift of the argument, and in terms as explicit as those of the Nicene Creed. We have not then to deal with any supposed process of deification, whereby the Person of

Jesus was "transfigured" in the apprehension of sub-apostolic or post-apostolic Christendom. It is John who proclaims that Jesus is the Word Incarnate, and that the Word is God. How can we account for John's conduct in representing Him as God if He was in truth only man? It will not avail to argue that John wrote his Gospel in his old age, and that the memories of his youthful companionship with Jesus had been coloured, heightened, transformed, idealised by the meditative enthusiasm of more than half a century. It will not avail to say that the reverence of the beloved disciple for his ascended Master was fatal to the accuracy of the portrait which he drew of Him. For what is this but to misapprehend the very fundamental nature of reverence? Truth is the basis, as it is the object of reverence, not less than of every other virtue. Reverence prostrates herself before a greatness, the reality of which is obvious to her; but she would cease to be reverence if she could exaggerate the greatness which provokes her homage, not less surely than if she could depreciate or deny it. The sentiment which, in contemplating its object, abandons the guidance of fact for that of imagination is disloyal to that honesty of purpose which is of the essence of reverence, and it is certain at last to subserve the purposes of the scorner and the spoiler. John insists that he teaches the Church only that which he has seen and heard. Even a slight swerving from truth must be painful to genuine reverence; but what shall we say of an exaggeration so gigantic, if an exaggeration it be, as that which transforms a human friend into the Almighty and Everlasting God? If Jesus Christ is not God, how is it that the most intimate of His earthly friends came to believe and to teach that He really is God?

Deified by Enthusiasm.

The theory that Jesus was deified by enthusiasm assumes the existence of a general disposition in mankind which is unwarranted by experience. Generally speaking men are not eager to believe in the exalted virtue, much less in the superhuman origin or dignity, of their fellowmen. And to do them justice, the writers who maintain that Jesus

was invested with Divine honours by popular fervour illustrate the weakness of their own principle very conspicuously. While they assert that nothing was more easy and obvious for the disciple of the apostolic age than to believe in the Divinity of his Master, they themselves reject that truth with the greatest possible obstinacy and determination ; well-attested though it be, now as then, by historical miracles and by overwhelming moral considerations ; but also proclaimed now, as it was not then by the faith of eighteen centuries and by the suffrages of all that is purest and truest in our existing civilisation.

The Testimony of Intimacy.

The unbelief of our day is naturally anxious to evade the startling fact that the most intimate of the companions of Jesus is also the most strenuous assertor of His Godhead. There is a proverb to the effect that no man's life should be written by his private servant. That proverb expresses the general conviction of mankind that, as a rule, like some mountain scenery or ruined castles, moral greatness in men is more picturesque when it is viewed from a distance. The proverb bids you not to scrutinise even a good man too narrowly, lest perchance you should discover flaws in his character which will somewhat rudely shake your conviction of his goodness. It is hinted that some unobtrusive weaknesses which escape public observation will be obvious to a man's everyday companion, and will be fatal to the higher estimate which, but for such close scrutiny, might have been formed respecting him. But in the case of Jesus Christ the moral of this cynical proverb is altogether at fault. Jesus Christ chooses one disciple to be the privileged sharer of a nearer intimacy than any other. The son of Zebedee lies upon His bosom at supper ; he is " the disciple whom Jesus loved." Along with Peter and James, this disciple is taken to the holy mount that he may witness the glory of his transfigured Lord. He enters the empty tomb on the morning of the Resurrection. He is in the upper chamber when the risen Jesus blessed the ten and the eleven. He is on the mount of the Ascension when the Conqueror moves up visibly into Heaven. But

he also is summoned to the garden where Jesus kneels in agony beneath the olive trees, and alone of the twelve he faces the fierce multitude on the road to Calvary and stands with Mary beneath the Cross and sees Jesus die. He sees more of the Divine Master than any other, more of His glory, more, too, of His humiliation. His witness is proportioned to his nearer and closer observation. Whether he is writing epistles of encouragement and warning, or narrating heavenly visions touching the future of the Church, or recording the experiences of those years when he enjoyed that intimate, unmatched companionship, John, beyond any other of the sacred writers, is the persistent herald and teacher of our Lord's Divinity.

The Majestic Glory of the Master.

In the eyes of John the eternal Person of Jesus shone forth through His humanity with translucent splendour, and wove and folded around itself as the days and weeks passed on a moral history of faultless grandeur. It was not the disciple who idealised the Master; it was the Master who revealed Himself in His majestic glory to the illumined eye and to the entranced touch of the disciple. No treachery of memory, no ardour of temperament, no sustained reflectiveness of soul could have compassed the transformation of a human friend into the almighty and everlasting Being. Nor was there room for serious error of judgment after a companionship so intimate, so heart-searching, so true, as had been that of Jesus with John. And thus to the beloved disciple the Divinity of his Lord was not a scholastic formula, nor a pious conjecture, nor a controversial thesis, nor the adaption of a popular superstition to meet the demands of a strong enthusiasm, nor a mystic reverie. It was nothing less than a fact of personal experience. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

LECTURE VI.

Our Lord's Divinity as Taught by James, Peter, and Paul.

"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2. 9).

WHILE John was teaching this doctrine under the form which had been guided to adopt, a parallel communication of the substance of the doctrine was taking place in several other quarters. John was supported, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, by men whose minds were of a totally distinct natural cast, and who expressed their thoughts in a religious phraseology which had little enough in common with that which was current in the school of Ephesus. Nevertheless it will be our duty this morning to observe how radical was their agreement with John in urging upon the acceptance of the human race the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God.

Schools Divided—Apostles United.

Very ingenius theories concerning a supposed division of the Apostolic Church into schools of thought holding antagonistic beliefs have been advanced of late years. And they have had the effect of directing a large amount of attention to the account which Paul gives in his Epistle to the Galatians of his interview with the leading apostles at Jerusalem (Ga. 2. 1-10). The accuracy of that account is not questioned even by the most destructive of the Tübingen divines. According to Irenæus and the great majority of authorities, both ancient and modern, the interview took place on the occasion of Paul's attendance at the Apostolical Council of Jerusalem. Paul says that James, Peter, and John, who were looked upon as " pillars " of the Church among the Judaizing Christians, as well as

among Christians generally, gave the right hands of fellowship to himself and to Barnabas. "It was agreed," says Paul, "that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." Now the historical interest which attaches to this recorded division of labour among the leading apostles is sufficiently obvious; but the dogmatic interest of the passage, although less direct, is even higher than the historical. This passage warrants us in inferring at least thus much, that the leading apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ were not hopelessly at issue with each other on a subject of such central and primary importance as the Divine and eternal nature of their Master.

Recent Imaginative Theories.

It might well seem at first sight that to draw such an inference at all within the walls of a Christian Church was itself an act for which the faith of Christians would exact an apology. But those who are acquainted with the imaginative licence of recent theories will not deem our inference altogether impertinent and superfluous. Of late years James has been represented as more of a Jew than a Christian, and as holding in reality a purely Ebionitic and Humanitarian belief as to the Person of Jesus. Paul has been described as the teacher of such a doctrine of the subordination of the Son as to be practically Arian. Peter is then exhibited as occupying a feeble undecided dogmatic position, intermediate to the doctrines of Paul and James; while all the three are contrasted with the distinct and lofty Christology said to be proper to the gnosis of John. Now, as has been already remarked, the historical trustworthiness of the passage in the Galatians has not been disputed even by the Tübingen writers. That passage represents John as intimately associated, not merely with Peter, but with James. It, moreover, represents these three apostles as giving pledges of spiritual co-operation and fellowship, from their common basis of belief and action, to the more recent convert Paul. Is it to be supposed that Paul could have been thus accepted as a fellow-worker on one and the same occasion by the apostle who is said to be a simple Humanitarian, and by the apostle whose whole

teaching centres in Jesus considered as the historical manifestation of the eternal Word ? Or are we to imagine that the apostles of Christ anticipated that indifference to doctrinal exactness which is characteristic of some modern schools ? Did they regard the question of our Lord's Personal Godhead as a kind of speculative curiosity ; as a scholastic conceit ; as having no necessary connection with vital, essential, fundamental Christianity ? And is Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, only describing the first great ecclesiastical compromise, in which truths of primary importance were sacrificed for an immediate practical object, more ruthlessly than on any subsequent occasion ?

Utterly Inadmissable.

My brethren, the answer to these questions could not be really doubtful to any except the most paradoxical of modern theorists. To say nothing of Peter and Jude, Paul's general language on the subject of heresy, and John's particular application of such terms as " the liar " and " antichrist " to Cerinthus and other heretics, make the supposition of such indifference as is here in question, in the case of the apostles, utterly inadmissible. If the apostles had differed vitally respecting the Person of Christ, they would have shattered the work of Pentecost in its infancy. And the terms in which they speak of each other would be reduced to the level of meaningless or insincere conventionalities. Considering that the Gospel presented itself to the world as an absolute and exclusive draught of Divine truth, contrasted as such with the perpetually shifting forms of human thought around it, we may deem it antecedently probable that those critics are mistaken who profess to have discovered at the fountain-head of Christianity at least three entirely distinct doctrines respecting so fundamental a question as the personal rank of Christ in the scale of being.

James and Paul.

Undoubtedly it is true that as the evangelists approach the Person of our Lord from distinct points of view, so do the writers of the apostolic epistles represent different

attitudes of the human soul towards the one evangelical truth, and in this way they impersonate types of thought and feeling which have ever since found a welcome and a home in the world-embracing Church of Jesus Christ. James insists most earnestly on the moral obligations of Christian believers; and he connects the Old Testament with the New by showing the place of the law, now elevated and transfigured into a law of liberty in the new life of Christians.

Paul, on the other hand, abounds in dogmatic statements. Still, in Paul doctrine is at least generally brought forward with a view to some immediate practical object. Only in five out of his fourteen Epistles can the doctrinal element be said very decidedly to predominate. Paul assumes that his readers have gone through a course of oral instruction in necessary Christian doctrine; he accordingly completes, he expands, he draws out into its consequences what had been already taught by himself or by others.

John, Peter, and Jude.

As for John, he is always a contemplative and mystical theologian. The eye of his soul is fixed on God, and on the Word Incarnate. John simply describes his intuitions. He does not argue, he asserts. He looks up to Heaven, and as he gazes he tells us what he sees. Nor is John's temper any mere love of speculation divorced from practice. Each truth which the apostle beholds, however unearthly and sublime, has a directly practical and transforming power; John knows nothing of realms of thought which leave the heart and conscience altogether untouched. Thus, speaking generally, the three apostles respectively represent the moralist, the practical dogmatist, and the saintly mystic; while Peter, as becomes the apostle first in order in the sacred college, seems to blend in himself the three types of apostolical teachers. His Epistles are not without elements that more especially characterise John, while they harmonise in a very striking manner those features of Paul and James which seem most nearly to approach divergence. It may be added that Peter's second Epistle finds its echo in Jude.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

I. The marked reserve which is observable in James' Epistle as to matters of doctrine, combined with his emphatic allusions to the social duties attaching to property and to class distinction, have been taken to imply that this Epistle represents what is assumed by some theories of development to have been the earliest form of Christianity. But James' Epistle is so far from belonging to the teaching of the earliest apostolical age that it presupposes nothing less than a very widespread and indirect effect of the distinctive teaching of Paul. Paul's emphatic teaching respecting faith as the receptive cause of justification must have been promulgated long enough and widely enough to have been perverted into a particular gnosis of an immoral Antinomian type. With that gnosis James enters into earnest conflict.

James' Attitude at the Council of Jerusalem.

In his earnest opposition to the Antinomian principle James insists upon the continuity of the New dispensation with the Old. Those indeed who do not believe the representations of the great apostles given us in the Acts to have been a romance of the second century, composed with a view to reconciling the imagined dissentions of the sub-apostolical Church, will not fail to note the significance of James' attitude at the Council of Jerusalem. After referring to the prophecy of Amos as confirmatory of Peter's teaching respecting the call of the Gentiles, James advises that no attempt should be made to impose the Jewish law generally upon the Gentile converts. Four points of observance were to be insisted on, for reasons of very various kinds ; but the general tenor of the speech proves how radically the apostle had broken with Judaism as a living system. Yet in his Epistle the real continuity of the law and the Gospel is undeniably prominent. Considering Christianity as a rule of life based upon a revealed creed, James terms it also a law. But the Christian law is no mere reproduction of the Sinaitic. The new law of Christendom is distinguished by epithets which define its

essential superiority to the law of the synagogue, and which, moreover, indirectly suggest the true dignity of its Founder. The Christian law is the law of liberty. To be really obeyed it must be obeyed in freedom. A slave cannot obey the Christian law, because it demands not merely the production of a certain outward acts, but the living energy of inward motives, whose soul and essence is love. Only a son whom Christ has freed from slavery, and whose heart would rejoice, if so it might be, to anticipate or to go beyond his Father's will can offer that free service which is exacted by the law of liberty. That service secures to all his faculties their highest play and exercise ; the Christian is most conscious of the buoyant sense of freedom when he is most eager to do the will of his Heavenly Parent. The Christian law, which is the law of love, is further described as the royal law (James 2. 8). Not merely because the law of love is specifically the first of laws, higher than and inclusive of all other laws, but because Christ, the King of Christians, prescribes this law to Christian love. To obey is to own Christ's legislative supremacy.

The Perfect Law.

Once more, the Christian law is the perfect law (James 1. 25). It is above human criticism. It will not, like the Mosaic law, be completed by another revelation. It can admit of no possible improvement. It exhibits the whole will of the unerring Legislator respecting man in his earthly state. It guarantees to man absolute correspondence with the true idea of his life ; in other words, his perfection, if only he will obey it. In a like spirit James speaks of Christian doctrine as the word of truth (James 1. 18). Christian doctrine is the absolute truth, and it has an effective regenerating force in the spiritual world which corresponds to that of God's creative word in the region of physical nature. But Christian doctrine is also the engrafted word (James 1. 21).

The Substance and Core of the Doctrine.

It is capable of being taken up into, and livingly united with, the life of human souls. It will thus bud forth into moral foliage and fruits which, without it, human souls are

utterly incapable of yielding. This λόγος* is clearly not the mere texture of the language in which the faith is taught. It is not the bare thought of the believer moulded into conformity with the ideas suggested by the language. It is the very substance and core of the doctrine; it is He in whom the doctrine centres; it is the Person of Jesus Christ Himself, whose humanity is the sprout, shoot, or branch of Judah, engrafted by His Incarnation upon the old stock of humanity, and upon all living Christian souls. Is not James here in fundamental agreement not merely with Paul, but with John? James' picture of the new law of Christendom harmonises with Paul's teaching, that the old law of Judaism without the grace of Christ does but rouse a sense of sin which it cannot satisfy, and that therefore the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made Christians free from the law of sin and death. James' doctrine of the engrafted Word is a compendium of the first, third, and sixth chapters of John's Gospel; the Word written or preached does but unveil to the soul the Word Incarnate, the Word who can give a new life to human nature because He is Himself the source of life.

James the Slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is in correspondence with these currents of doctrine that James, although our Lord's own first cousin, opens his Epistle by representing himself as standing in the same relation to Jesus Christ as to God. He is the slave of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. In like manner throughout his Epistle he appears to apply the word Κύριος† to the God of the Old Testament and to Jesus Christ quite indifferently. Especially noteworthy is his assertion that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge of men, is not the delegated representative of an absent majesty, but is Himself the Legislator enforcing His own laws. The Lawgiver, he says, is one Being with the Judge who can save and can destroy (James 4. 12); the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of Heaven, has enacted the law which He thus administers. With a reverence which is as practical as his teaching is suggestive, James in this one short Epistle reproduces more of the

* "Word." † "Lord."

words spoken by Jesus Christ our Lord than are to be found in all the other Epistles of the New Testament taken together. He hints that all social barriers between man and man are as nothing when we place mere human eminence in the light of Christ's majestic Person ; and when he names the faith of Jesus Christ he terms it with solemn emphasis the " faith of the Lord of Glory," thus adopting one of the most magnificent of Paul's expressions, and attributing to our Lord a majesty altogether above this human world. In short, James' recognition of the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity is just what we might expect it to be if we take into account the mainly practical scope of his Epistle. Our Lord's Divinity is never once formally proposed as a doctrine of the faith ; but it is largely, although indirectly, implied. It is implied in language which would be exaggerated and overstrained on any other supposition. It is implied in a reserve which may be felt to mean at least as much as most demonstrative protestations. A few passing expressions of the lowliest reverence disclose the great doctrine of the Church respecting the Person of her Lord, throned in the background of the apostle's thought.

PETER'S TEACHING IN THE ACTS AND HIS EPISTLES.

II. Of Peter's recorded teaching there are two distinct stages in the New Testament. The first is represented by his missionary sermons in the Acts of the Apostles ; the second by his general Epistles.

The Central Subject of His Teaching.

1. Although Jesus Christ is always the central subject in the sermons of this apostle, yet the distinctness with which he exhibits our Lord in the glory of His Divine nature seems to vary with the varying capacity for receiving truth on the part of his audience. Like Jesus Christ Himself, Peter teaches as men are able to bear his doctrine ; he does not cast pearls before swine. In his missionary sermons he is addressing persons who were believers in the Jewish dispensation, and who were also our Lord's contemporaries. Accordingly his sermons contain a double appeal ; first,

to the known facts of our Lord's life and death, and, above all, of His resurrection from the dead ; and secondly, to the correspondence of these facts with the predictions of the Hebrew Scriptures. Like James, Peter lays especial stress on the continuity subsisting between Judaism and the Gospel. But while James insists upon the moral element of that connection, Peter addresses himself rather to the prophetical. Even before the day of Pentecost Peter points to the Psalter as foreshadowing the fall of Judas (Acts 1. 16, 20). When preaching to the multitude which had just witnessed the Pentecostal gifts, Peter observes that these wonders are merely a realisation of the prediction of Joel respecting the last days (Acts 2. 14-21) ; and he argues elaborately that the language of David in the sixteenth Psalm could not have been fulfilled in the case of the prophet-king himself, still lying among his people in his honoured sepulchre, while it had been literally fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Acts 2. 24-36), who had notoriously risen from the grave.

The Prophet Foretold by Moses.

In his striking and pleading sermon to the multitude after the healing of the lame man in the porch of Solomon, Peter contends that the sufferings of Christ had been " showed before " on the part of the God of Israel by the mouth of all His prophets (Acts 3. 18), and that in Jesus Christ the prediction of Moses respecting a coming Prophet, to whom the true Israel would yield an implicit obedience, had received its explanation. When arraigned before the Council the apostle insists that Jesus is that true " Corner-stone " of the temple of souls, which had been foretold both by Israel and by a later Psalmist ; and that although He had been set at naught by the builders of Israel He was certainly exalted and honoured by God. In the instruction delivered to Cornelius before his baptism Peter states that " all the prophets give witness " to Jesus, " that through His Name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins " (Acts 10. 43). Philip's exposition of Christian doctrine to the Ethiopian eunuch was based upon Isaiah's prediction of the Passion. Stephen's argument

before his judges was cut short by a violent interruption while it was yet incomplete. But Stephen, like Peter, appeals to the prediction in Deuteronomy of the Prophet to whom Israel would hearken. And the drift of the proto-martyr's address goes to show that the whole course of the history of Israel pointed to the advent of One who should be greater than either the law or the temple—of One in whom Israel's wonderful history would reach its natural climax—of that "Just One" who in truth had already come, but who, like prophets before Him, had been betrayed and murdered by a people still as of old, "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears."

The Early Missionary Discourses.

It is not too much to say that in the teaching of the earliest Church, as represented by the missionary discourses of Peter and the deacons, Jesus Christ is the very soul and end of Jewish prophecy. This would of itself suggest an idea of His Person which rises above any merely Humanitarian standard. Peter indeed places himself habitually at the point of view which would enable him to appeal to the actual experience of the generation he was addressing. He begins with our Lord's humiliation, which men had witnessed, and then he proceeds to describe His exaltation as the honour put by God upon His human nature. He speaks of our Lord's humanity with fearless plainness (Acts 2. 22). The Man Christ Jesus is exhibited to the world as a miracle-worker; as Man, He is anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power; as the true Servant of God, He is glorified by the God of the patriarchs; He is raised from the dead by Divine Power; He is made by God both Lord and Christ; and He will be sent by the Lord at "the times of refreshing" as the ordained Judge of quick and dead (Acts 10. 42). But this general representation of the human nature by which Christ had entered into Jewish history is interspersed with glimpses of His Divine personality itself, which is veiled by His Manhood. Thus we find Peter in the porch of Solomon applying to our Lord a magnificent title, which at once carries our thoughts into the very heart of the distinctive Christology of John.

The Leader or Prince of Life.

Christ, although crucified and slain, is yet the Leader or Prince of Life (Acts 3. 15). That He should be held in bondage by the might of death was not possible. The heavens *must* receive Him, and He is now the Lord of all things. It is He who from His heavenly throne has poured out upon the earth the gifts of Pentecost. His Name spoken on earth has a wonder-working power ; as unveiling His nature and office it is a symbol which faith reverently treasures, and by the might of which the servants of God can relieve even physical suffering. As a refuge for sinners the Name of Jesus stands alone ; no other Name has been given under Heaven whereby the one true salvation can be guaranteed to the sons of men (Acts 4. 12). Do we not interpret these early discourses most naturally when we bear in mind the measure of reticence which active missionary work always renders necessary, if truth is to win its way amidst prejudice and opposition ? And will not this consideration alone enable us to do justice to those vivid glimpses of Christ's higher nature, the fuller exhibition of which is before us in the apostle's general Epistles ?

Peter the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

2. In Peter's general Epistles it is easy to trace the same mind as that which speaks to us in the earliest missionary sermons of the Acts. As addressed to Christian believers these Epistles exhibit Christian doctrine in its fullness, but with an eye to practical objects, and without the methodical completeness of an oral instruction. Peter announces himself as the apostle of Jesus Christ ; he is Christ's slave as well as His Apostle. In his Epistles Peter lays the great stress on prophecy which is so observable in his missionary sermons. Thus, as in his speech before the Council, so in his first Epistle, he specially refers (1 Peter 2. 6) to the prophecy of the rejected Corner-stone, which our Lord had applied to Himself. But Peter's general doctrine of our Lord's relation to Hebrew prophecy should be more particularly noticed. According to Peter the prophets of the Old Testament did not only utter literal predictions of the expected Christ, but in doing this they were Christ's own

servants, His heralds, His organs. He who is the subject of the Gospel story, and the living Ruler of the Church, had also, by His Spirit. been Master and Teacher of the prophets. Under His guidance it was that they had foretold His sufferings. It was the Spirit of Christ who was in the prophets testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow (1 Peter 1. 11). The prophets did not at first learn the full scope and meaning of the words they uttered (1 Peter 1. 10), but they spoke glorious truths which the Church of Jesus understands and enjoys (2 Peter 1. 20). Peter speaks of conversion from Judaism or heathendom as the "being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light." It is the happiness of Christians to suffer and to be reviled for the Name of Christ. The Spirit of glory and of God rests upon them. The Spirit is blasphemed by the unbelieving world, but He is visibly honoured by the family of God's children. It is the Person of Jesus in whom the spiritual life of His Church centres. The Christians whom Peter is addressing never saw Him in the days of His flesh ; they do not see Him now with the eye of sense. But they love Him, invisible as He is, because they believe in Him. The eye of their faith does see Him.

The Lord Christ is Present in their Hearts;

they are to "sanctify" Him in their hearts, as God was "sanctified" by the worship of Israel. They rejoice in this clear, constant, inward vision with a joy which language cannot describe, and which is radiant with the glory of the highest spiritual beauty. They are in possession of a spiritual sense whereby the goodness of Jesus may be even tasted ; and yet the truths on which their souls are fed are mysteries so profound as to rouse the keen but baffled wonder of the intelligences of Heaven (1 Peter 1. 12). Such language appears to point irresistibly to the existence of a supernatural religion with a superhuman Founder, unless we are to denude it of all spiritual meaning whatever by saying that it only reflects the habitual exaggeration of Eastern fervour. Why is the intellectual atmosphere of the Church described as "marvellous light?" Why is

suffering for Jesus so much a matter for sincere self-congratulation? Why does the Divine Spirit rest so surely upon Christian confessors? Why is the invisible Jesus the object of such love, the source of such inexpressible and glorious joy, if, after all, the religion of Jesus is merely a higher phase of human opinion and feeling, and His Church a human organisation, and His Person only human, or at least not literally Divine? The language of Peter respecting the Christian life manifestly points to a Divine Christ.

The Vicarious Suffering of Christ.

Peter lays especial stress both on the moral significance and on the atoning power of the death of Jesus Christ. Peter says that "Christ has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3. 18). This vicarious suffering depended upon the fact that Jesus, when dying, impersonated sinful humanity. "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." Stricken by the anguish of His Passion, the dying Christ is the consummate Model for all Christian sufferers, in His innocence, in His silence, in His perfect resignation. But also the souls of men, wounded by the shafts of sin, may be healed by the virtue of that sacred pain, and a special power to wash out the stains of moral guilt is expressly ascribed to the Redeemer's blood. The Christian as such is predestined in the eternal Counsels, not merely to submission to the Christian faith, but also to "a sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Apostle earnestly insists that it was no mere perishable earthly treasure, no silver or golden wares, whereby Christians had been bought out of their old bondage to the traditional errors and accustomed sins of Judaism or of heathenism. The mighty spell of moral and intellectual darkness had indeed been broken, but by no less a ransom than the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb without blemish and immaculate.

The Moral Meaning of the Passion.

Are we to suppose that while using this burning language to extol the precious blood Peter is recklessly following

a rhetorical impulse, or that he is obscuring the moral meaning of the Passion by dwelling upon its details in misleading language which savours too strongly of the sacrificial ritual of the temple ? Is he not even echoing the Baptist ? (John 1. 29). Is he not in correspondence with his brother apostles ? Is he not summarising Paul ? (Acts 20. 28). Is he not anticipating John ? (1 John 1. 7). Certainly this earnest recognition of Christ's true humanity as the seat of His sufferings is a most essential feature of the apostle's doctrine ; but what is it that gives to Christ's human acts and sufferings such preterhuman value ? Is it not that the truth of Christ's Divine personality underlies this entire description of His redemptive work, rescuing it from the exaggeration and turgidity with which it would be fairly chargeable if Christ were merely human or less than God ? That this is in fact the case is abundantly manifest (1 Peter 1. 20) ; and indeed the Person of Christ appears to be hinted at in Peter's Epistle by the same august expression which has been noticed as common to James and to John. The Logos or Word of God, living and abiding for ever (1 Peter 1. 23), is the Author of the soul's new birth, and Christ Jesus our Lord does not only bring us this Logos from Heaven ; He is this Logos. And thus in His home of glory angels and authorities and powers are made subject unto Him ; and He is not said to have been taken up into Heaven, but to have gone up thither, as though by His own deed and will. And when Peter exhorts Christians to act in such a manner that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, he pauses reverently at this last most precious and sacred Name to add, " to whom is the glory and the power unto ages beyond ages."

The Second Epistle of Peter.

Peter's second Epistle, like his first, begins and ends with Jesus. Its main positive theme is the importance of the higher practical knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus is not set before Christians as a revered and departed Teacher whose words are to be gathered up and studied ; He is set forth rather as an invisible and

living Person who is to be spiritually known by souls. Along with this practical knowledge of Jesus, as with knowledge of God, there will be an increase of grace, and of its resultant inward evidence, spiritual peace. For this practical knowledge of Jesus is the crowning point of other Christian attainments. It is the consummate result both of faith and practice, both of the intellectual and of the moral sides of the Christian life. In the long line of graces which this special knowledge implies are faith and general religious knowledge on the one hand, and on the other moral strength, self-restraint, patience, piety, brotherly love, and, in its broadest sense, charity. In this higher knowledge of Jesus all these excellences find their end and their completion. On any other path the soul is abandoned to spiritual blindness, tending more and more to utter forgetfulness of all past purifications from sin.

For this higher practical knowledge of Jesus Christ is the means whereby Christians escape from the polluting impurities of the life of the heathen world. It raises Christian souls towards the unseen King in His glory ; it secures their admission to His everlasting realm. If Christians would not be carried away from their steadfast adherence to the truth and life of Christianity by the errors of those who hate all law, let them endeavour to grow in this blessed knowledge of Jesus. The prominence given to the Person of Christ, in this doctrine of an ἐπίγνωσις* of which His Person is the object, leads us up to the truth of His real Divinity. If Jesus, thus known and loved, were not accounted God, then we must say that God is in this Epistle thrown utterly into the background, and that His human messenger has taken His place.

The Practical Side of the Epistle.

Nor is the negative and polemical side of the Epistle much less significant than its constructive and hortatory side. The special misery of the false teachers of whom the apostle speaks as likely to afflict the Church, will consist in their "denying the Sovereign that bought them," and

* Intimate acquaintance or knowledge.

so bringing on themselves swift destruction. Unbelievers might contend that the apostolical teachings respecting the present power and future Coming of Jesus were cleverly-invented myths; but Peter had himself witnessed the majesty of Jesus in His transfiguration. The apostle knows that he himself will quickly die; he has had a special revelation from the Lord Jesus to this effect. Throughout this Epistle the Person of Jesus is constantly before us. As He is the true object of Christian knowledge, so He is the Lord of the future kingdom of the saints. He is mocked at and denied by the heretics; His Coming it is which the scoffing materialism of the age derides; His judgments are foreshadowed by the great destructive woes of the Old Testament. Again and again, as if with a reverent eagerness which takes pleasure in the sacred words, the apostle names His Master's Name and titles. He is Jesus our Lord; He is our Lord Jesus Christ; He is the Lord and Saviour; He is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; He is our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. His power is spoken of as Divine (2 Peter 1. 3), and through the precious things promised by Him to His Church Christians are made partakers of the nature of God. To Christ, in His exalted majesty, a tribute of glory is due, both now and unto the day of eternity. Throughout this Epistle Jesus Christ is constantly named where we should expect to find the Name of God. The apostle does not merely proclaim the Divinity of Jesus in formal terms; he everywhere feels and implies it.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

III. Akin to Peter's second Epistle in its language and purpose is the short Epistle of Jude. Like his brother James, Jude, although our Lord's first cousin, introduces himself as the slave of Jesus Christ. Jude does not also term himself the slave of God. If believing Christians are sanctified in God the Father, they are preserved in a life of faith and holiness by union with Jesus Christ. The religion of Jesus, according to Jude, is the final revelation of God, the absolute truth, the true faith. Men should spare no efforts on behalf of the true faith. It is

the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The gnostics alluded to in this Epistle, like those foretold by Peter, are said to

"Deny our only Sovereign and Lord, Jesus Christ."

They are threatened with the punishments awarded by Jesus to Israel in the wilderness, and to the rebel angels; they will perish as Sodom and Gomorrha. Enoch is cited to describe Jesus coming to judgment, surrounded by myriads of saints. The authors of all unholy deeds will then be convicted of their crimes; the hard things spoken against the Judge by impious sinners will be duly punished. Christians, however, are to build themselves up upon their most holy faith: their life is fashioned in devotion to the blessed Trinity. It is a life of prayer: their souls live in the Holy Spirit as in an atmosphere. It is a life of persevering love, whereof the Almighty Father is the object. It is a life of expectation: they look forward to the indulgent mercy which our Lord Jesus Christ will show them at His Coming. Christ is the Being to whom they look for mercy and the issue of His compassion is everlasting life. Could any merely human Christ have had this place in the heart and faith of Christians, or on the judgment-seat of God?

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

IV. But it is time that we should proceed to consider, however briefly, the witness of that great apostle, whose Epistles form so much larger a contribution to the sacred volume of the New Testament than is supplied by any other among the inspired servants of Christ.

1. (*a*) Paul insists with particular earnestness upon the truth of our Lord's real humanity. This truth is not impaired by such expressions as the "form of a servant" (Phil. 2. 7), the "fashion of a man" (Phil. 2. 8), the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8. 3), which are employed either to describe Christ's humanity as a mode of being, or to hint at its veiling a higher nature undiscerned by the senses of man, or to mark the point at which, by its glorious inaccessibility to sin, it is in contrast with the nature of

that frail and erring race to which it truly belongs. Nor is our Lord's humanity conceived of as a phantom, when the apostle has reached a point of spiritual growth at which the outward circumstances of Christ's life are wellnigh forgotten in an overmastering perception of His spiritual and Divine glory (2 Cor. 5 16). Paul speaks plainly of our Lord as being manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3. 16); as possessing a body of material flesh (Col. 1. 22); as being "made of a woman" (Gal. 4. 4); as being "born of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1. 3); as having drawn the substance of His flesh from the race of Israel (Rom. 9. 5). As a Jew, Jesus Christ was born under the yoke of the law (Gal. 4. 4.) His human life was not merely one of self- denial (Rom. 15. 3) and obedience; it was pre-eminently a life of sharp suffering (Heb. 5. 8). The apostle uses energetic expressions to describe our Lord's real share in our physical human weakness (2 Cor. 13. 4), as well as in those various forms of pain, mental and bodily, which He willed to undergo, and which reached their climax in the supreme agonies of the Passion (2 Cor. 1. 5). If, however, Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2. 8), this, as is implied, was of His own free condescension; and Paul dwells with rapture upon the glory of Christ's risen body, to which our bodies of humiliation will hereafter in their degrees by His almighty power be assimilated (Phil. 3. 21). Upon two features of our Lord's sacred humanity does Paul lay especial stress.

The Sinlessness of Christ.

First, Christ's Manhood was clearly void of sin, both in soul and body, and in this respect it was unlike any one member of the race to which it belonged (2 Cor. 5. 21). This sinlessness, however, did but restore humanity "in Christ" to its original type of perfection. Thus, secondly, Christ's Manhood is representative of the human race; it realises the archetypal idea of humanity in the Divine mind. Christ, the second* Adam, according to Paul, stands in a relation to the regenerate family of men analogous to that ancestral relationship in which the first Adam stands to all

* More Scripturally "Last."—Ed.

his natural descendants. But this correspondence is balanced by a contrast. In two great passages Paul exhibits the contrast which exists between the second Adam and the first (Rom 5. 12-21 ; 1 Cor. 15. 45-49).

The First and the Last Adam.

This contrast is physical, psychological, moral, and historical. The body of the first Adam is corruptible and earthly ; the body of the Second Adam is glorious and incorruptible. The first Adam enjoys natural life ; he is made a living soul. The second Adam is a supernatural Being, capable of communicating His higher life to others ; He is a quickening Spirit. The first Adam is a sinner, and his sin compromises the entire race which springs from him. The second Adam sins not ; His life is one mighty act of righteousness and they who are in living communion with Him share in this His righteousness. The historical consequence of the action of the first Adam is death, the death of the body and of the soul. This consequence is transmitted to his descendants along with his other legacy of transmitted sin. The historical consequence of the action and suffering of the second Adam is life, and communion with His living righteousness is the gauge and assurance to His faithful disciples of a real exemption from the law of sin and death (Rom. 5. 12). Such a contrast, you observe, might well suggest that the second Adam, Representative of man's race, its true Archetype, its Restorer and its Saviour, is Himself more than man. Certainly ; but nevertheless it is as Man that Christ is contrasted with our first parent, and it is in virtue of His Manhood that He is our Mediator, our Redeemer (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6), our Saviour from Satan's power, our Intercessor with the Father (Heb. 2. 14). Great stress indeed does Paul lay upon the Manhood of Christ as the instrument of His mediation between earth and Heaven, as the channel through which intellectual truth and moral strength descend from God into the souls of men, as the Exemplar wherein alone human nature has recovered its ideal beauty, as entering a sphere wherein the sinless One could offer the perfect, world-representing sacrifice of a truly obedient

will. So earnestly and constantly does Paul's thought dwell on our Lord's mediating humanity, that to unreflecting persons his language might at times appear to imply that Jesus Christ is personally an inferior being, external to the unity of the Divine essence. Thus he tells the Corinthians that Christians have one Lord Jesus Christ as well as one God. Thus he reminds Timothy that there is one God and

One Mediator Between God and Man,

the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all. Thus he looks forward to a day when the need for Christ's mediatorial royalty having ceased, His Manhood shall be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15. 28). It is at least certain that no modern Humanitarian could recognise the literal reality of our Lord's humanity with more explicitness than did the apostle who had never seen Him on earth, and to whom He had been manifested in visions which a docetic enthusiast might have taken as sufficient warrant for denying His actual participation in our flesh and blood.

Paul a Strict Monotheist.

(*b*) On the other hand, Paul is as strict a monotheist as any unconverted pupil of Gamaliel; he does not merely retain his hold upon the primal truth of God's inviolate unity; he is especially devoted to it.

God is parted from the very highest forms of created life by a measureless interval, and yet the universe is a real reflection of His nature (Rom. 1. 20). The relation of the creatures to God is threefold. Nothing exists which has not proceeded originally from God's creative hand. Nothing exists which is not upheld in being and perfected by God's sustaining and working energy. Nothing exists which shall not at the last, whether mechanically or consciously, whether willingly or by a terrible constraint, subserve God's high and resistless purpose. For as He is the Creator and Sustainer, so He is the one last end of all created existences. Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things (Rom. 11. 36). So absolute an idea of

God excludes all that is local, transient, particular, finite. God's supreme unity is the truth which determines the universality of the Gospel; since the Gospel unveils and proclaims the one supreme, world-controlling God. Hence the apostle infers

The Deep Misery of Paganism.

The Pagan representation of Deity was "a lie" by which this essential truth of God's Being was denied. The Pagans had forfeited that partial apprehension of the glory of the incorruptible God which the physical universe and the light of natural conscience placed within their reach. They had yielded to those instincts of creature-worship which mere naturalism is ever prone to indulge. The Incarnation alone subdues these instincts by consecrating them to the service of God Incarnate; while beyond the Church they perpetually threaten naturalistic systems with an utter and disastrous subjection to the empire of sense. When man then had fairly lost sight of the unity and spirituality of God, Paganism speedily allowed him to sink beneath a flood of nameless sensualities; he had abandoned the Creator to become, in the most debased sense, the creature's slave.

The Idolatries of Greece.

At another time the apostle's thought rests for an instant upon the elegant but impure idolatries to which the imagination and the wealth of Greece had consecrated those beautiful temples which adorned the restored city of Corinth. "To us Christians," he fervently exclaims, "there is but one God, the Father; all things owe their existence to Him, and we live for His purposes and His glory." In after years Paul is writing to a fellow-labourer for Christ, and he has in view some of those gnostic imaginations which already proposed to link earth with Heaven by a graduated hierarchy of Aeons, thus threatening the reintroduction either of virtual polytheism or of conscious creature-worship. Against this mischievous speculation the apostle utters his protest; but it issues from his adoring soul upwards to the footstool of the one supreme

and Almighty Being in the richest and most glorious of the doxologies which occur in his Epistles. God is the King of the ages of the world ; He is the imperishable, invisible, only wise Being (1 Tim. 1. 17). God is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords ; He only has from Himself, and originally, immortality ; He dwells in the light which is inaccessible to creatures ; no man has seen Him ; no man can see Him ; let honour and power be for ever ascribed to Him (1 Tim. 6. 15, 16).

What Position does Paul Ascribe to Christ?

Paul is, beyond all question, an earnest monotheist ; his faith is sensitively jealous on behalf of the supremacy and the rights of God. What then is the position which he assigns to Jesus Christ in the scale of Being ? That he believes Jesus Christ to be merely a man is a paradox which could be maintained by no careful reader of his Epistles. But if, according to Paul, Christ is more than man, what is He ? Is He still only an Arian Christ ? or is He a Divine Person ? In Paul's thought this question could not have been an open one. His earnest, sharply-defined faith in the One Most High God must force him to say either that Christ is a created Being, or that He is internal to the essence of God. Nor is the subject of such a nature as to admit of accommodation or compromise in its treatment. In practical matters, and where the law of God permits, Paul may become all things to all men that he may by all means save some. But he cannot, as if he were a Pagan politician of old, or a modern man of the world, compliment away his deepest faith. He cannot ascribe Divinity to a fellow-creature by way of panegyrical hyperbole ; his belief in God is too powerful, too exacting, too keen, too real. Paul may teach the Athenians that we live and move and have our being in the all-present, all-encompassing life of God ; he may bid the Corinthians expect a time when God shall be known and felt by every member of His great family to be all in all. But Paul cannot merge the Maker and Ruler of the universe, so gloriously free in His creative and providential action, in any conception which identifies Him with the work of His hands, or which reduces Him to

the level of an impersonal quality or force. The apostle may contemplate the vast hierarchy of the blessed angels, ranging in their various degrees of glory between the throne of God and the children of men. But no heavenly intelligence, however exalted, is seen in his pages to trench for one moment upon the incommunicable prerogatives of God. Paul may describe the regenerate life of Christians in such terms as to warrant us in saying that Christ's true members become Divine by spiritual communion with God in His Blessed Son (1 Cor. 3. 16, 17 ; 6. 19, 20). But the saintliest of men, the most exalted and majestic of seraphs, are alike removed by an infinite interval from

The One Uncreated, Self-Existent, Incorruptible Essence (Rom. 11. 34-36).

There is no room in Paul's thoughts for an imaginary being like the Arian Christ hovering indistinctly between created and uncreated life ; since, where God is believed to be so utterly remote from the highest creatures beneath His throne, Christ must either be conceived of as purely and simply a creature with no other than a creature's nature and rights, or He must be adored as One who is for ever and necessarily internal to the uncreated life of the Most High.

The Condescension of Christ.

2. It has been well observed that " the trait in Christ which filled Paul's whole mind was His condescension ;" and that " the charm of that condescension lay in its being voluntary." Certainly ! But condescension is the act of bending from a higher station to a lower one, and the question is, from what did Christ condescend ? If Christ was merely human, what was the human eminence from which Paul believed Him to be stooping ? Was it a social eminence ? But as the favourite of the synagogue, and withal as protected by the majesty of the Roman franchise, Paul occupied a social position not less widely removed from that of a Galilaean peasant leading a life of vagrancy than are your circumstances, my brethren, who belong to the middle and upper classes of this country removed from the lot of the homeless multitudes who day by day seek relief

in our workhouses. Was it an intellectual eminence? But the apostle had who sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and had drawn largely from the fountains of Greek thought and culture, had at least enjoyed educational advantages which were utterly denied to the Prophet of Nazareth. Was it then a moral eminence? But if Jesus was merely man, was He, I do not say morally perfect, but morally eminent at all? Was not His self-assertion such as to be inconsistent with any truthful recognition whatever of the real conditions of a created existence?

The Angels His Worshippers.

But was the eminence from which Christ condescended angelical as distinct from human? Paul had drawn the sharpest distinction between Christ and the angels; Christ is related to the angels, in the belief of the apostle, simply as the Author of their being (Col. 1. 16); while the appointed duties of the angels are to worship His Person and to serve His servants (Heb. 1. 6, 14).

Two Stages of Condescension

What then was the position from which Christ condescended? Two stages of condescension are indeed noted, one within and one beyond the limits of our Lord's human life. Being found in fashion as Man, He voluntarily humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (Phil. 2. 8). But the earlier and the greater act of condescension was that whereby He had become Man out of a state of pre-existent glory. Paul constantly refers to the pre-existent life of Jesus Christ. The second Adam differs from the first in that He is "from Heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 47). When ancient Israel was wandering in the desert Christ had been Himself invisibly present as Guardian and Sustainer of the Lord's people (1 Cor. 10. 4). Paul is pleading on behalf of the poor Jewish Churches with their wealthier Corinthian brethren; and he points to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. Here Christ's eternal wealth is in contrast with His temporal impoverishment. For His poverty began with the manger

of Bethlehem ; He became poor by the act of His Incarnation ; being rich according to the unbegun, unending life of His higher nature, He became poor in time. When Paul says that our Lord was " manifested in the flesh," he at least implies that Christ existed before this manifestation ; when Paul definitely ascribes to our Lord the function of a Creator who creates not for a Higher Power but for Himself, we rise from the idea of pre-existence to the idea of a relationship towards the universe, which can belong to one Being alone. This will presently be considered.

"Over All, God Blessed for Ever."

Certainly Paul used the terms " form of God," " image of God," when speaking of the Divinity of Jesus Christ (Phil 2. 6 ; Col. 1. 15). But these terms do not imply that Christ's Divinity only resembles or is analogous to the Divinity of the Father. They do not mean that as Man He represents the Divine perfections in an inferior and partial manner to our finite intelligence which is incapable of raising itself sufficiently to contemplate the transcendent reality. They are necessary in order to define the personal distinction which exists between the Divine Son and the Eternal Father. Certainly it is no mere human being or seraph whom Paul describes as being " over all, God blessed for ever " (Rom. 9. 5). You remind me that these words are referred by some modern scholars to the Eternal Father. Certainly they are ; but on what grounds ? Of scholarship ? What then is Paul's general purpose when he uses these words ? He has just been enumerating those eight privileges of the race of Israel, the thought of which kindled in his true Jewish heart the generous and passionate desire to be made even anathema for his rejected countrymen. To these privileges he subjoins a climax. It was from the blood of Israel that the true Christ had sprung, so far as His human nature was concerned ; but Christ's Israelitic descent is, in the apostle's eyes, so consummate a glory for Israel, because Christ is much more than one of the sons of men ; because by reason of His higher pre-existent nature He is " over all, God blessed for ever." This is the natural sense of the passage. Nor in point of fact does Paul say

more in this famous text than when in writing to Titus he describes Christians as "looking for the Blessed Hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us" (Titus 2. 13). Here the grammar apparently, and the context certainly, oblige us to recognise the identity of "our Saviour Jesus Christ" and "our great God." As a matter of fact, Christians are not waiting for any manifestation of the Father. And He who gave Himself for us can be none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

"In the Form of God."

Reference has already been made to that most solemn passage in the Epistle to the Philippians (Phil. 2. 6, 7). Our Lord's Divine nature is here represented as the seat of His eternal personality; His human nature is a clothing which He assumed in time. It is impossible not to be struck by the mysterious statement that Christ, being in the form of God, did not look upon equality with God as a prize to be seized and kept hold on. The point of our Lord's example lies in His emptying Himself of the glory or "form" of His eternal Godhead. Worthless indeed would have been the force of His example had He been in reality a created Being, who only abstained from grasping tenaciously at Divine prerogatives which a creature could not have arrogated to himself without impious folly. Christians are to have in themselves the mind of Christ Jesus; but what that mind is they can only understand by considering what His apostle believed Christ Jesus to have been before He took on Him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death.

"The Image of God."

Perhaps the most exhaustive assertion of our Lord's Godhead which is to be found in the writings of Paul is that which occurs in the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 1. 15-17). This magnificent dogmatic passage is introduced, after the apostle's manner, with a strictly practical object. The Colossian Church was exposed to the intellectual attacks of a theosophic doctrine which degraded Jesus Christ to the rank of one of a long series of inferior

beings, supposed to range between mankind and the supreme God. Against this position Paul asserts that Christ is the image of the invisible God. The expression εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ* supplements the title of "the Son." As "the Son" Christ is derived eternally from the Father, and He is of one substance with the Father. As "the image" Christ is, in that one substance, the exact likeness of the Father, in all things except being the Father. The Son is the image of the Father, not as the Father, but as God; the Son is "the image of God." The εικὼν † is indeed originally God's unbegun, unending reflection of Himself in Himself; but the εικὼν is also the organ whereby God, in His essence invisible, reveals Himself to His creatures. Thus the εικὼν is, so to speak, naturally the Creator, since creation is the first revelation which God has made of Himself. Man is the highest point in the visible universe; in man God's attributes are most luminously exhibited; man is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11. 7). But Christ is the adequate image of God, God's self-reflection in His own thought, eternally present with Himself.

"The Firstborn of All Creation."

As the εἰκὼν, Christ is the πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,‡ that is to say, *not* the first in rank among created beings, *but* born before any created beings. That this is a true sense of the expression is etymologically certain; but it is also the only sense which is in real harmony with the relation in which, according to the context, Christ is said to stand to the created universe.

That relation, according to Paul, is threefold. Of all things in earth and Heaven, of things seen and unseen, of the various orders of the angelic hierarchy, of thrones, of dominions, of principalities, of powers, it is said that they were created in Christ, by Christ, and for Christ. *In Him.* There was no creative process external to and independent of Him, since the archetypal forms after which the creatures are modelled, and the sources of their strength and consistency of being, eternally reside

* Generally translated "Image of God." † Image.
‡ Translated "Firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1. 15, R.V.).

in Him. *By Him.* The force which has summoned the worlds out of nothingness into being, and which upholds them in being, is His ; He wields it ; He is the One producer and sustainer of all created existence. *For Him.* He is not, as Arianism afterwards pretended, merely an inferior workman, creating for the glory of a higher Master, for a God superior to Himself. He creates for Himself ; He is the end of created things as well as their immediate source, and in living for Him every creature finds at once the explanation and the law of its being. For "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1. 17). After such a statement it follows naturally that the πλήρωμα,* that is to say, the entire cycle of the Divine attributes, considered as a series of powers or forces, dwells in Jesus Christ ; and this, not in any merely ideal or transcendental manner, but with that actual reality which men attach to the presence of material bodies which they can feel and measure through the organs of sense. "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9). Although throughout this Epistle the word Logos is never introduced, it is plain that the εἰκὼν of Paul is equivalent in His rank and functions to the Logos of John. Each exists prior to creation ; each is the one Agent in creation ; each is a Divine Person ; each is equal with God and shares, His essential life ; each is really none other than God.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Indeed with this passage in the Colossians only two others in the entire compass of the New Testament can, on the whole, be compared. Allusion has already been made to the prologue of John's Gospel, and it is no less obvious to refer to the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews a comparison is instituted between Christianity and Judaism and this comparison turns partly on the spiritual advantages which belong to the two systems respectively, and partly on the relative dignity of the persons who represent the two dispensations, and who mediate accordingly, in whatever

* Translated "Fullness" in Col. 2. 9.

senses, between God and humanity. Thus our Incarnate Lord as the one great High Priest is contrasted with Aaron and his successors. Thus too as the one perfect revealer of God, He is compared with Moses and the Jewish prophets.

Christ is a Higher Priest than Aaron.

As the antitype of Melchisedec, Christ is a higher priest than Aaron; as a Son reigning over the House of God, Christ is a greater ruler than the legislator whose praise it was that he had been a faithful servant. As Author of a final, complete, and unique revelation Christ stands altogether above the prophets by whom God had revealed His mind in many modes and in many fragments, in revelations very various as to their forms, and, at certain epochs, almost incessant in their occurrence. But if the superiority of Christianity to Judaism was to be completely established, a further comparison was necessary. The later Jewish theologians had laid much stress upon the delivery of the Sinaitic law through the agency of angels acting as delegates for the Most High God. The Author of Christianity might be superior to Moses and the prophets, but could He challenge comparison with those pure and mighty spirits compared with whom the greatest of the sons of Israel, as beings of flesh and blood, were insignificant and sinful?

The Lord of Angels.

The answer to this is, that if Christ is not the Peer of the angels, this is because He is their Lord and Master (Heb. 2. 3). The angels are ministers of the Divine will; they are engaged in stated services enjoined on them towards creatures lower than themselves, yet redeemed by Christ. But He, in His glory above the heavens, is invested with attributes to which the highest angel could never pretend. In His crucified but now enthroned humanity He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High; He is seated there as being Heir of all things; the angels are themselves but a portion of His vast inheritance. The dignity of His titles is indicative of His essential rank. Indeed He is expressly addressed as God (Heb. 1. 8). That He is one with God as having streamed forth eternally

from the Father's essence like a ray of light from the parent fire with which it is unbrokenly joined is implied in the expression, "The brightness of His glory" (Heb. 1. 3).

"The Express Image of His Person."

That He is both personally distinct from, and yet literally equal to, Him of whose essence He is the adequate imprint is taught us in the phrase, "The express image of His Person" (Heb. 1. 3). By Him, therefore, the universe was made (Heb. 1. 2), and at this moment all things are preserved and upheld in being by the fiat of His almighty word. What created angel can possibly compare with Him? In the Name which He bears and which unveils His nature; in the honours which the heavenly intelligences themselves may not refuse to pay Him, even when He is entering upon His profound self-humiliation; in the contrast between their ministerial duties and His divine and unchanging royalty; in His relationship of Creator both to earth and Heaven; and in the majestic certainty of His triumph over all who shall oppose the advance of His Kingdom, we recognise a Being for whose Person, although it be clothed in a finite human nature, there is no real place between humanity and God. While the Epistle to the Hebrews lays even a stronger emphasis than any other book of the New Testament upon Christ's true humanity, it is nevertheless certain that no other book more explicitly asserts the reality of His Divine prerogatives.

Not Merely as Master, but Divine Lord.

3. Enough will have been said to show that the Apostle Paul believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, not in the moral sense of Socinianism, nor in the ditheistic sense, so to speak, of Arianism, but in the literal, metaphysical, and absolute sense of the Catholic Church.

Paul never speaks of Jesus Christ as a pupil of less originality and genius might speak of a master in moral truth, whose ideas he was recommending, expanding, defining, defending, popularising among the men of a later generation. Paul never professes to be working on

the common level of human power and knowledge with a master from whom he differed, as an inferior teacher might differ, only in the degree of his capacity and authority. Paul always writes and speaks as becomes the slave of Jesus. He is indeed a most willing and enthusiastic slave, reverently gathering up and passionately enforcing all that touches the work and glory of that Divine Master to whom he has freely consecrated his liberty and his life.

Paul's Sermons in the Acts.

In Paul's earliest sermons we do not find the moral precepts of Jesus a more prominent element than the glories of His Person and of His redemptive work. That the reverse is the case is at once apparent from a study of the great discourse which was pronounced in the synagogue of the Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13. 17-23). The past history of Israel is first summarized from a point of view which regards it as purely preparatory to the manifestation of the anticipated Saviour; and then the true Messiahship of Jesus is enforced by an appeal to the testimony of John the Baptist, to the correspondence of the circumstances of Christ's death with the prophetic announcements, and to the historical fact of His resurrection from the grave, which had been witnessed by the apostles as distinctly as it had been foretold by the prophets. Thus the apostle reaches his practical conclusion. To believe in Jesus Christ is the one condition of receiving remission of sins and (how strangely must such words have sounded in Jewish ears !) justification from all things from which men could not be justified by the divinely-given law of Moses. To deny Jesus Christ is to incur those penalties which the Hebrew Scriptures denounced against scornful indifference to the voice of God and to the present tokens of His love and power.

Paul at the Areopagus.

At first sight Paul's sermon from the steps of the Areopagus might seem to be rather Theistic than Christian. Paul had to gain the ear of a "philosophical" audience which imagined that "Jesus and the Resurrection" were two "strange demons" who might presently be added to

the stock of deities already venerated by the Athenian populace. Paul is therefore eager to set forth the lofty spirituality of the God of Christendom; but although he insists chiefly on those Divine attributes which are observable in nature and Providence his sermon ends with Jesus. After showing what God is in Himself, and what are the natural relations which subsist between God and mankind, Paul touches the conscience of his Athenian audience by a sharp denunciation of the vulgar idolatry which it despised, and he calls men to repent by a reference to the coming judgment, which conscience itself foreshadowed. But the certainty of that judgment has been attested by the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus; the risen Jesus is the future Judge (Acts 17. 31; 1 Thess. 2. 19).

Paul on the Strand at Miletus.

Or listen to Paul as with fatherly authority and tenderness he is taking his leave of his fellow-labourers in Christ, the presbyters of Ephesus, on the strand of Miletus. Here the Apostle's address moves incessantly round the Person of Jesus. He protests that to lead men to repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20. 21) had been the single object of his public and private ministrations at Ephesus. He counts not his life dear to himself, if only he can complete the mission which is so precious to him because he has received it from the Lord Jesus. The presbyters are bidden to "shepherd the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood;" and the apostle concludes by quoting a saying of the Lord Jesus which has not been recorded in the Gospels, but which was then reverently treasured in the Church, to the effect that "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

In the two apologetic discourses delivered, the one from the stairs of the tower of Antonia before the angry multitude, and the other in the Council Chamber at Cæsarea before King Agrippa II of Chalcis, Paul justifies his missionary activity by dwelling upon the circumstances which accompanied and immediately followed his conversion.

Paul and His Heavenly Vision.

Everything had turned upon a fact which the apostle abundantly insists upon; he had received a revelation of Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory. It was Jesus who had spoken to Paul from Heaven; it was Jesus who had revealed Himself as persecuted in His suffering Church; it was to Jesus that Paul had surrendered his moral liberty; it was from Jesus that he had received specific orders to go into Damascus; Jesus had commissioned him to be a minister and witness, both of what he had seen and of the truths which were yet to be disclosed to him; it was by Jesus that he was sent both to Jews and Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that," continued the heavenly Speaker, "they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." It was Jesus who had appeared to Paul when he was in an ecstasy in the Temple, had bidden him leave Jerusalem suddenly, and had sent him to the Gentiles. The revelation of Jesus had been emphatically the turning-point of the apostle's life; it had first determined the direction and had then quickened the intensity of his action. He could plead with truth before Agrippa that he had not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision. But who can fail to see that the Lord, who in His glorified Manhood thus speaks to His servant from the skies, and who is withal revealed to him in the very centre of his soul, is no created being, is neither saint nor seraph, but in very truth the Master of consciences, the Monarch who penetrates, inhabits and rules the secret life of spirits, the King who claims the fealty and who orders the ways of men?

Paul and His Preaching.

Paul's popular teaching then is emphatically a "preaching of Jesus Christ." Our Lord is always the apostle's theme; but the degree in which His divine glory is unveiled varies with the capacities of the Jewish or heathen listeners for bearing the great discovery. The doctrine is distributed, if we may so speak, in a like varying manner over the whole text of Paul's Epistles. It lies in those greetings

by which the apostle associates Jesus Christ with God the Father as being the source no less than the channel of the highest spiritual blessings. It is pointedly asserted when the Galatians are warned that Paul is "an apostle not from men nor by men, *but* by Jesus Christ and God the Father."

In the Benedictions and Doxologies.

It is implied in the commands and the benedictions (2 Thess. 3. 6, 12) which are pronounced in the Name of Christ without naming the Name of God (Rom. 16. 20). It underlies those early apostolical hymns sung, as it would seem, in the Redeemer's honour (such are 1 Timothy 1. 15; 3. 16; 2 Timothy 2. 11-13; Titus 3. 4-7); it justifies the thanksgivings and doxologies which set forth His praise (Rom. 9. 5). It alone can explain the application of passages, which are used in the Old Testament of the Lord Jehovah, to the Person of Jesus Christ (Joel 2. 32; Rom. 10. 13); such an application would have been impossible unless Paul had renounced his belief in the authority and sacred character of the Hebrew Scriptures, or had explicitly recognised the truth that Jesus Christ was Jehovah Himself visiting and redeeming His people.

The Current Topics of Paul's Epistles.

Mark, too, how the truth before us mingles with the current topics of Paul's Epistles; how it is often presupposed even where it is not asserted in terms. Does that picture of the future Judge whose second Coming is again and again brought before us in the Epistles to the Thessalonians befit one who is not Divine? Is the Justifier of humanity in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, to whom the whole of the Old Testament points as its fulfilment, only a human martyr after all? Why then is the effect of His death so distinct in kind from any which has followed upon the martyrdom of His servants? How comes it that by dying He has achieved that restoration of the rightful relations of man's being towards God and moral truth, which the law of nature and the law of Sinai had alike failed to secure? Does not the whole representation of the second Adam in the Epistle to the Romans

and in the first Epistle to the Corinthians point to a dignity more than human ? Can He, who is not merely a living soul, but a quickening Spirit ; from whom life radiates throughout renewed humanity ; from whom there flows a stream of grace more abundant than the inheritance of sin which was bequeathed by our fallen parent (Rom. 5. 15 ; 15. 29) ; can He be, in His apostle's mind, merely one of the race which He thus blesses and saves ? And if Jesus Christ be more than man, is it possible to suggest any intermediate position between humanity and the throne of God, which Paul, with his earnest belief in the God of Israel, could have believed Him to occupy ?

In the Epistle to the Corinthians.

In the Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle is contrasting his preaching with the philosophy of the Greek and the hopes of the Jewish world around him. Jesus crucified (1 Cor. 1. 23, 24) is his central subject ; Jesus crucified is his whole philosophy. Is he prescribing the law of apostolic labours in building up souls or Churches ? " Other foundation can no man lay " than " Jesus Christ." Is he unfolding the nature of the Church ? It is " the body of Christ " (1 Cor. 12. 27). Is he arguing against sin of impurity ? Christians have only to remember that they are members of Christ. Is he deepening a sense of the glory and of the responsibility of being a Christian ? Christians are reminded that Jesus Christ is in them except they be reprobates. Is he excommunicating or reconciling a flagrant offender against natural law ? He delivers to Satan in the Name of Christ ; he absolves in the Person of Christ. Is he pointing to the source of the soul's birth and growth in the life of light ? It is the " illumination of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God ; " it is the " illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ " (2 Cor. 4. 4). Is he describing the spirit of the Christian life ? It is perpetual self-mortification for the love of Jesus that the moral life of Jesus may be manifested to the world in our frail human nature. Is he sketching out the intellectual aim of his ministry ? Every thought is to be brought as a captive into

submission to Christ. Is he unveiling the motive which sustained him in his manifold sufferings ? All was undergone for Christ. Is he suffering from a severe bodily or spiritual affliction ? Thrice he prays to Jesus Christ for relief. And when he is told that the trial will not be removed, since in possessing Christ's grace he has all that he needs, he rejoices in the infirmity against which he had prayed, "that the power of Christ may tabernacle upon him." Would he summarize the relations of the Christian to Christ ? To Christ he owes his mental philosophy, his justification before God, his progressive growth in holiness, his redemption from sin and death. Would he mark the happiness of instruction in that "hidden philosophy" which was taught in the Church among the perfect, and which was unknown to the rulers of the non-Christian world ? It might have saved them from crucifying the Lord of glory. Would he lay down an absolute criterion of moral ruin ? "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." Would he impart an apostolical benediction ? In one Epistle he blesses his readers in the Name of Christ alone ; in the other he names the three blessed Persons : while "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is mentioned, not only before "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost," but before "the love of God."

The Prison Epistles of Paul.

Still more remarkably do the Epistles of the first imprisonment present us with a picture of our Lord's work and Person which absolutely presupposes, even where it does not in terms assert, the doctrine of His Divinity. The Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are even more intimately related to each other than are those to the Romans and the Galatians. They deal with the same lines of truth ; they differ only in method of treatment. That to the Ephesians is devotional and expository ; that to the Colossians is polemical. In the Colossians the dignity of Christ's Person is put forward most explicitly as against the speculations of a Judaizing theosophy which degraded Christ to the rank of an archangel, and which recommended as a substitute for Christ's redemptive work

ascetic observances, founded on a trust in the cleansing and hallowing properties and powers of nature. In the Epistle to the Ephesians our Lord's personal dignity is asserted more indirectly. It is implied in His reconciliation of Jews and heathens to each other and to God, and still more in His relationship to the predestination of the saints. In both Epistles we encounter two prominent lines of thought, each in a high degree pointing to Christ's Divine dignity. The first, the absolute character of the Christian faith as contrasted with the relative character of heathenism and Judaism; the second, the recreative power of the grace of Christ. In both Epistles the Church is considered as a vast spiritual society which, besides embracing as its heritage all races of the world, pierces the veil of the unseen, and includes the families of Heaven in its majestic compass. Of this society Christ is the head, and it is "His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Christ is the predestined point of unity in which earth and Heaven, Jew and Gentile, meet and are one. Christ's death is the triumph of peace in the spiritual world. Peace with God is secured through the taking away of the law of condemnation by the dying Christ, who nails it to His Cross and openly triumphs over the powers of darkness. Peace among men is secured because the Cross is the centre of the regenerated world, as of the moral universe. Divided races, religions, nationalities, classes, meet beneath the Cross; they embrace as brethren; they are fused into one vast society which is held together by an indwelling presence, reflected in the general sense of boundless indebtedness to a transcendent love. Hence in these Epistles such marked emphasis is laid upon the unity of the body of Christ, since the reunion of moral beings shows forth Christ's personal glory. Christ is the Unifier. As Christ in His Passion is the Combiner and Reconciler of all things in earth and Heaven, so He ascends to Heaven; He descends to Hell on His errand of reconciliation and combination.

Christ and The Church.

He institutes the Church (Eph. 4. 11-13); He is the Root from which her life springs, the Foundation on which her

superstructure rests (Col. 2. 7); He is the quickening, organising principle within her (Eph. 4. 15. 16). The closest of natural ties is the chosen symbol of His relation to her; she is His bride. For her, in His love, He gave Himself to death, that He might sanctify her, and might so present her to Himself, her Lord—blameless, immaculate, glorious (Eph. 5. 25-27). Her members must grow up unto Him in all things. Accordingly, not to mention the great passage already referred to, in the Epistle to the Colossians Jesus Christ is said in that Epistle to possess the intellectual as well as the other attributes of Deity. In the allusions to the three most holy Persons, which so remarkably underlie the structure and surface-thought of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Jesus Christ is associated most significantly with the Father and the Spirit. He is the Invisible King, whose slaves Christians are. Nay, His realm is termed explicitly "the Kingdom of Him who is Christ and God" (Eph. 5. 5); the Church is subject to Him. He is the object of Christian study and of Christian hope.

The Epistle to the Philippians.

In the Epistle to the Philippians it is expressly said that all created beings in Heaven, on earth, and in Hell, when His triumph is complete, shall acknowledge the majesty even of His human nature. The preaching of the Gospel is described as the preaching of Christ Death is a blessing for the Christian, since by death he gains the eternal presence of Christ. The Philippians are specially privileged in being permitted, not merely to believe on Christ, but to suffer for Him. The apostle trusts in Jesus as in Providence to be able to send Timothy to Philippi. He contrasts the selfishness of ordinary Christians with a disinterestedness that seeks the things (it is not said of God, but) of Christ. The Christian "boast" centres in Christ, as did the Jewish in the law; the apostle had counted all his Jewish privileges as dung that he might win Christ; Christ has taken possession of him; Christ strengthens him; Christ will one day change this body of our humiliation, that it may become of like form with the body of His glory, according to the energy of His ability even to subdue all

things unto Himself. In this Epistle, as in those to the Corinthians, the apostle is far from pursuing any one line of doctrinal statement : moral exhortations, interspersed with allusions to persons and matters of interest to himself and to the Philippians, constitute the staple of his letter. And yet how constant are the references to Jesus Christ, and how inconsistent are they, taken as a whole, with any conception of His Person which denies His Divinity !

The Pastoral Epistle.

In the pastoral epistles the Divinity of our Lord is taught both in express terms (Titus 2. 13) and by tacit implication. His functions as the Awarder of indulgence and mercy (1 Tim. 1. 16), His active providence over His servants, and His ready aid in trouble (2 Tim. 3. 11) are introduced naturally as familiar topics. And if the Manhood of the one Mediator is prominently alluded to as being the instrument of His mediation (1 Tim. 2. 5), His pre-existence in a higher nature is as clearly intimated (1 Tim. 3. 16).

After what has already been said on the prominence of the doctrine of Christ's Divinity in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it may suffice here to remark that the power of His priestly mediation as there insisted on, although exhibited in His glorified humanity, does of itself imply a superhuman personality. This indeed is more than hinted at in the terms of the comparison which is instituted between Melchisedec and his Divine Antitype. History records nothing of the parents, of the descent, of the birth, or of the death of Melchisedec ; he appears in the sacred narrative as if he had no beginning of days or end of life. In this he is " made like unto the Son of God," with His eternal pre-existence and His endless days. This eternal Christ can save to the uttermost, because He has a Priesthood that is unchangeable, since it is based on His own everlasting Being (Heb. 7. 24, 25).

In short, if we bear in mind that as the Mediator Christ is God and Man, Paul's language about Him is explained by its twofold drift. On the one hand, the true force of the distinction between " one God " and " one Lord " or " one Mediator " becomes apparent in those passages,

where Christ in His assumed Manhood is for the moment in contrast with the unincarnate Deity of the Father (1 Cor. 8. 6; Eph. 4. 5; 1 Tim. 2. 5). On the other hand, it is only possible to read the great Christological passages of the apostle without doing violence to the plain force of his language when we believe that Christ is God.

Leading Lines of Paul's Teaching.

4. It is with the prominent features of Paul's characteristic teaching as with the general drift of his great Epistles; they irresistibly imply a Christ who is Divine.

What is Justifying Faith?

(*a*) Every reader of the New Testament associates Paul with the special advocacy of the necessity of faith as the indispensable condition of man's justification before God. What is this "faith" of Paul? It is in experience the most simple of the movements of the soul; and yet, if analysed, it turns out to be one of the most complex among the religious ideas in the New Testament. The word πίστις* implies, first of all, both faithfulness and confidence; but religious confidence is closely allied to belief; that is to say, to a persuasion that some unseen fact is true. And this belief, having for its object the unseen, is opposed by Paul to "sight." It is fed by, or rather it is in itself, a higher intuition than any of which nature is capable; it is the continuous exercise of a new sense of spiritual truth with which man has been endowed by grace. Faith is not merely a perception of the understanding; it is a kindling of the heart and a resolve of the will; it is, in short, an act of the whole soul, which, by one simultaneous complex movement, sees, feels, and obeys the truth presented to it.

Now, according to Paul, it is Jesus Christ who is eminently the object of Christian faith.

Now if our Lord had been, in the belief of His apostle, only a created being, is it conceivable that He should have been thus put forward as having a right wellnigh to engross the vision, the love, the energy of the human soul? In the spiritual teaching of Paul, Christ eclipses God if He is

* Usually translated "faith."

not God, since it is emphatically Christ's Person, as warranting the preciousness of His work, which is the object of justifying faith. Nor can it be shown that the intellect and heart and will of man could conspire to give to God a larger tribute of spiritual homage than they are required by the apostle to give to Christ.

Regeneration.

(*b*) Again, how much is implied as to the Person of Christ by the idea of regeneration as it is brought before us in the writings of Paul! Paul uses the word itself only once (Titus 3. 5). But the idea recurs continually throughout his writings; it is not less prominent in them than is the idea of faith. This idea of regeneration is sometimes expressed by the image of a change of vesture. The regenerate nature has put off the old man, with his deeds of untruthfulness and lust, and has put on the new or ideal man, the perfect moral Being, the Christ. Sometimes the idea of regeneration is expressed more closely by the image of a change of form. The regenerate man has been metamorphosed. He is made to correspond to the form of Christ; he is renewed in the image of Christ; his moral being is reconstructed. Sometimes, however, and most emphatically, regeneration is paralleled with natural birth. Regeneration is a second birth. The regenerate man is a new creature (Gal. 6. 15); he is a work of God (Eph. 2. 10); he has been created according to a Divine standard (Eph. 4. 24). But, and this is of capital importance, he is also said to be created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 10); Christ is the sphere of the new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17). The Christian is, to the end of time, crucified with Christ (Rom. 6. 6); he dies with Christ (2 Tim. 2. 11); he is buried with Christ (Rom. 6. 4); he is quickened together with Christ (Eph. 2. 5); he rises with Christ (Eph. 2. 6); he lives with Christ (Rom. 6. 8). He is not merely made to sit together in heavenly places as being in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2. 6), he is a member of His body, as out of His flesh and out of His bones (Eph. 5. 30).

What becomes of this language if Jesus Christ be not truly God? No conceivable relationship to a

human teacher or to a created being will sustain its weight. If Christ be not God, must not this renewal of man's nature rest only on an empty fiction, must not this regeneration of man's soul be but the ecstasy of an enthusiastic dreamer ?

A Saviour who is God as well as Man.

(*c*) If Paul can suffer the loss of all things that at the last he may win Christ, if he can do all things through One that strengtheneth him, it is because he is consciously reaching towards or leaning on the arm of a Saviour who is God as well as Man. We, too, must believe and confess that that human Friend whose words enlighten us, whose blood cleanses us, who renewed and even now sustains us, is in the truth of His higher nature none other and no less than the unerring, the all-merciful, the Almighty God.

LECTURE VII.*

Some Consequences of the Doctrine of our Lord's Divinity.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8. 32).

THERE are three distinct bearings of the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity which it is of importance to consider. This doctrine protects truths prior to itself, and belonging both to natural and to revealed theology. It also illuminates the meaning, it asserts the force of truths which depend upon itself, which are, to speak humanly, below it, and which can only be duly appreciated when they are referred to it as justifying and explaining them. Lastly, it fertilises the Christian's moral and spiritual life by supplying a motive to the virtues which are most characteristically Christian, and without which Christian ethics sink down to the level of Pagan morality.

THE CONSERVATIVE FORCE OF THE DOCTRINE.

I. Observe, first, the conservative force of the doctrine. It protects the truths which it presupposes. Placed at the centre of the faith of Christendom, it looks backward as well as forward; it guards in Christian thought the due apprehension of those fundamental verities without which no religion whatever is possible, since they are the postulates of all religious thought and activity.

A Personal God Really Exists.

1. What, let us ask, is the practical relation of the doctrine before us to the primal truth that a personal God really exists?

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* Note.—This is actually Lecture VIII in the series, but Lecture VII being on the Homoousion is regarded as too technical and too definitely outside the main scope of the work to be included in this edition.—ED.

Both in the last century and in our own day it has been the constant aim of a philosophical deism to convince the world that the existence of a Supreme Being would be more vividly, constantly, practically realised if the dogma of His existence were detached from the creed of Christendom. The pure theistic idea, we are told, if it were only freed from the earthly and material accessories of an incarnation, if it were not embarrassed by the "metaphysical conception" of distinct personal subsistencies within the Godhead, if it could be left to its native force, to its spirituality of essence, to its simplicity of form, would exert a prodigious influence on human thought, if not on human conduct. This influence is said to be practically impossible so long as theistic truth is overlaid by the "thick integument" of Christian doctrine. Accordingly a real belief in God is to be deepened and extended, and atheism is to be expelled from the minds of men by the destruction of dogmatic Christianity.

The Weakness and Failure of Deism.

But let me ask, Has any such anticipation as yet been realised by deism? Is it in the way to be realised at this hour? Need I remind you that throughout Europe the most earnest assaults of infidelity upon the Christian creed within the last ten years have been directed against its *theistic*, as distinct from its peculiarly Christian elements? When the possibility of miracle is derided; when a Providence is scouted as the fond dream of man's exaggerated self-love; when belief in the power of prayer is treated as a crude superstition, illustrative of man's ignorance of the scientific conception of law; when the hypothesis of absolutely invariable law and the cognate conception of nature as a self-evolved system of self-existent forces and self-existent matter are advancing with giant strides in large departments of the literature of the day, it is not Christianity as such, it is Theism, which is really jeopardised and insulted. Among the forces arrayed against Christianity at this hour, the most formidable, because the most consistent and the most sanguine, is that pure materialism, which has been intellectually organised in the somewhat

pedantic form of positivism. To the positivist the most etherealized of deistic theories is just as much an object of pitying scorn as the creed of a John and an Athanasius.

The Growth of Materialism.

Both are relegated to "the theological period" of human development. And if we may judge from the present aspect of the controversy between non-Christian spiritualists and the apostles of positivism, it must be sorrowfully acknowledged that the latter appear to gain steadily and surely on their opponents. For a living faith in a supreme Being the human mind requires motives, corollaries, consequences, supports. These are not supplied by the few abstract considerations which are entertained by the philosophical deists. Whatever may be the intellectual strength of their position against atheism, the practical weakness of that position is a matter of notoriety; and if this weakness is apparent in the case of the philosophers themselves, how much more patent is it when deism attempts to make itself a home in the heart of the people! That abstract and inaccessible being who is placed at the summit of deistic systems is too subtle for the thought and too cold for the heart of the multitudes of the human family. When God is regarded less as the personal object of affection and worship than as the necessary term of an intellectual equation, the sentiment of piety is not really satisfied; it hungers, it languishes, it dies. And this purely intellectual manner of apprehending God, which kills piety, is so predominant in every genuine deistic system as to bring about, in no long lapse of time, its impotence and extinction as a popular religious force.

The Supreme Agent.

without whom the deist cannot construct a satisfactory theory of being, is gradually divested of all personal characteristics, and is resolved into a formula expressing only supreme agency. His moral perfections fall into the background of thought, while he is conceived of, more and more exclusively, as the universal mind. And his intellectual attributes are in turn discarded when for the Supreme Mind

is substituted the conception of the mightiest force. Long before this point is reached deistic philosophy is nervously alarmed lest its god should still be supposed to penetrate as a living providence down into this human world of suffering and sin. Accordingly, professing much anxiety for his true dignity and repose, deism weaves around his liberty a network of imaginary law ; and if he has not been previously destroyed by the materialistic controversialists, he is at length conducted by the cold respect of deistic thinkers to the utmost frontier of the conceivable universe, where, having been enthroned in a majestic inaction, he is as respectfully abandoned. As suggesting a problem which may rouse a faint spasmodic intellectual instinct, his name may still be mentioned from time to time in the world of letters. But the interest which he creates is at the best on a level with that of the question whether the planets are or are not inhabited. As an energetic, life-controlling, life-absorbing power,

The God of Deism is Extinct.

Now the doctrine that Jesus of Nazareth is the Incarnate God protects this primal theistic truth which non-Christian deism is so incapable of popularising and even of retaining. The incarnation bridges over the abyss which opens in our thought between earth and Heaven ; it brings the Almighty, All-wise, Illimitable Being down to the mind and heart of His reasonable creatures. The Word made flesh is God condescending to our finite capacities ; and this condescension has issued in a clear, strong sense of the Being and attributes of God, such as is not found beyond the bounds of Christendom. The last prayer of Jesus, that His redeemed might know the only true God, has been answered in history. How profound, how varied, how fertile is the idea of God, of His nature and of His attributes, in John, in Paul, in Gregory Nazianzen, in Augustine ! How energetic is this idea, how totally is it removed from the character of an impotent speculation ! How does this keen, strong sense of God's present and majestic life leave its mark upon manners, literatures, codes of law, national institutions, national characters ! How utterly does its

range of energy transcend any mere employment of the intellect; how does it, again and again, bend wills and soften hearts, and change the current and drift of lives, and transfigure the souls of men! And why is this?

The Incarnation Brings God Nigh to Us.

Because the incarnation rivets the apprehension of God on the thought and heart of the Church, so that within the Church theistic truth bids defiance to those influences which tend perpetually to sap or to volatilise it elsewhere. Instead of presenting us with some fugitive abstraction, inaccessible to the intellect and disappointing to the heart, the incarnation points to Jesus. Jesus is the Almighty, restraining His illimitable powers; Jesus is the incomprehensible, voluntarily submitting to bonds; Jesus is Providence, clothed in our own flesh and blood; Jesus is the infinite charity, tending us with the kindly looks and tender handling of a human love; Jesus is the eternal wisdom, speaking out of the depths of infinite thought in a human language. Jesus is God making Himself, if I may dare so to speak, our tangible possession; He is God brought "very nigh to us, in our mouth and in our heart;" we behold Him, we touch Him, we cling to Him, and lo! we are partakers of the nature of Deity through our actual membership in His body; we dwell, if we will, evermore in Him, and He in us.

Result of the Divine Incarnation.

This, then, is the result of the Divine Incarnation: it brings God close to the inmost being of man, yet without forfeiting, nay, rather while guarding most carefully, in man's thought, the spirituality of the Divine essence. Nowhere is the popular idea of God more refined, more spiritual, than where faith in the Divinity of Jesus is clearest and strongest. No writers have explained and asserted the immateriality, the simplicity, the indivisibility of the essence of God more earnestly than those who have most earnestly asserted and explained the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and of the Divine Incarnation. For if we know our happiness in Christ, we Christians are united to

God, we possess God, we consciously live, and move, and have our being in God. Our intelligence and our heart alike apprehend God in His majestic and beautiful life so truly and constantly, because He has taken possession of our whole nature, intellectual, moral, and corporeal, and has warmed and illuminated and blessed it by the quickening Manhood of Jesus. We cannot reflect upon and rejoice in our union with Jesus without finding ourselves face to face with the Being and attributes of Him with whom in Jesus we are made one. Holy Scripture has traced the failure and misery of all attempts on the part of a philosophical deism to create or to maintain in the soul of man a real communion with our Heavenly Parent. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father (1 John 2. 23). And the Christian's practical security against those speculative difficulties to which his faith in a living God may be exposed lies in that constant contemplation of and communion with Jesus which is of the essence of the Christian life. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6).

A Safeguard Against Pantheism.

(2) But if belief in our Saviour's Godhead protects Christian thought against the intellectual dangers which await an arid deism, does it afford an equally effective safeguard against pantheism? In conceiving of God the choice before a pantheist lies between alternatives from which no genius has as yet devised a real escape. God, the pantheist must assert, is literally everything; God is the whole material and spiritual universe; He is humanity in all its manifestations; He is by inclusion every moral and immoral agent; and every form and exaggeration of moral evil, no less than every variety of moral excellence and beauty, is part of the all-pervading, all-comprehending movement of His universal life. If this revolting blasphemy be declined, then the God of pantheism must be the barest abstraction of abstract being.

Man's Noblest Instinct Satisfied.

The strength of pantheistic systems lies in that craving both of the intellect and of the heart for union with the absolute Being, which is the most legitimate and the noblest instinct of our nature. This craving is satisfied by the Christian's union with the Incarnate One. But while satisfying it, the Incarnation raises an effective barrier against its abuse after the fashion of pantheism. Against the dogma of an Incarnate God, rooted in the faith of a Christian people, the waves of pantheistic thought may surge and lash themselves and break in vain. For the Incarnation presupposes that master-truth which pantheism most passionately denies. It presupposes the truth that between the finite and the infinite, between the Creator and the cosmos, between God and man, there is of necessity a measureless abyss. On this point its opposition to pantheism is as earnest as that of the most jealous deism ; but the Christian creed escapes from the deistic conception of an omnipotent moral being, surveying intelligently the vast accumulation of sin and misery which we see on this earth, yet withal remaining unmoved, inactive, indifferent.

The Gulf between Earth and Heaven Spanned.

The Christian creed spans this gulf which yawns between earth and Heaven by proclaiming that the everlasting Son has taken our nature upon Him. In His Person a created nature is joined to the uncreated by a union which is for ever indissoluble. But what is that truth which underlies this transcendent mystery ? What sustains it, what even enhances it, what forbids it to melt away in our thought into a chaotic confusion out of which neither the divine nor the human could struggle forth into the light for distinct recognition ? It is, I reply, the truth that the natures thus united in the Person of Jesus are radically, by their essence, and for ever, distinct. It is by reason of this ineffaceable distinctness that the union of the Godhead and Manhood in Jesus is such an object of wondering and thankful contemplation to Christians. Accordingly, at the very heart of the creed of Christendom, we have a guarantee against the

cardinal error of pantheism; while yet by our living fellowship as Christians with the Divine and Incarnate Son we realise the aspiration which pantheism both fosters and perverts.

The Dignity of Unfallen Manhood.

3. One more sample shall be given of this protective efficacy of the doctrine before us. If it guards in our thought the honour, the majesty, the life of God, it also protects the true dignity and the rights of man. The unsettled spirit of our time, when it has broken with the claims of faith, oscillates, whether from caprice or in bewilderment, between the most inconsistent errors. If at one while its audacity would drive the great God from His throne in Heaven to make way for the lawless intellect and will of His creature, at another it seems possessed by an infatuated passion for the degradation of mankind. It either ignores such features of the higher side of our complex being as are the powers of reflection and of inference, or it arbitrarily assumes that they are only the products of civilisation. It fixes its attention exclusively upon the graduated variety of form perceptible in a long series of crania which it has arranged in its museum, and then it proclaims with enthusiasm that a Newton or a Herschel is after all only the cultivated descendant of a grotesque and irrational ape. It even denies to man the possession of any spiritual nature whatever; thought is asserted to be inherent in the substance of the brain; belief in the existence of an immaterial essence is treated as an unscientific and superstitious prejudice; virtuous and vicious actions are alluded to as alike results of purely physical agencies; man is to all intents and purposes a soulless brute. My brethren, you will not suppose that I am desiring to derogate, however indirectly, from the claims of that noble science which patiently investigates the physiology of our animal nature; I am only protesting against a rash and insulting hypothesis, for which science, if her sons could speak with one voice, would be loath to make herself responsible, since by it her true utterances are piteously caricatured.

The True Divinity of our Incarnate Lord.

But so long as the Christian Church believes in the true Divinity of our Incarnate Lord, it is not probable that theories which deny the higher aspects of human nature will meet with large acceptance. We Christians can bear to be told that the skull of this or that section of the human family bears this or that degree of resemblance to the skull of a gorilla. We know, indeed, that as receivers of the gift of life we are simply on a level with the lowest of the lower creatures; we owe all that we are and have to God. Do we not thank Him for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life? Might He not have given us less than we have? Might He not have given us nothing? What have we, what are we, that we have not received? The question of man's place in the universe touches not any self-achieved dignity of our own, but the extent and the nature of the Divine bounty.

Man Not Merely an Animal.

We cannot consent to suppose ourselves to be mere animal organisms, without any immaterial soul or future destiny, parted by no distinctive attribute from the perishing beasts around us.

But this exaltation of our human nature would be the wildest dream unless Jesus were truly God as well as Man. His Divinity is the warrant that in Him our race is "crowned with glory and honour," and that in taking upon Him "not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," He was vindicating our individual capacity for the highest greatness. But, as a practical matter of fact, Christendom maintains its faith in the dignity of man amidst the creatures of God by its faith in the incarnation of the divine Son. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

DEFINITE BELIEFS RESPECTING THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

II. Let us proceed to consider the illuminative or explanatory relation in which the doctrine stands to

truths which are internal to the Christian revelation, and which themselves presuppose some definite belief respecting the Person of Christ.

Now, our Lord's whole mediatorial work, while it is discharged through His assumed humanity, is efficacious and complete, simply because the Mediator is not merely Man, but God. As a Prophet, His utterances are infallible. As a Priest, He offers a prevailing sacrifice. As a King, He wields an authority which has absolute claims upon the conscience, and a power which will ultimately be proved to be resistless.

His Teaching Infallible.

1. A sincere and intelligent belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ obliges us to believe that Jesus Christ, as a teacher, is infallible. His infallibility is not a gift, it is an original and necessary endowment of His higher nature. If indeed Christ had been merely man, He might still have been endowed with an infallibility such as was that of His own apostles. As it is, to charge Him with error is to deny that He is God.

It will be urged by those who impugn the trustworthiness of the Pentateuch, without denying in terms the Divinity of Christ, that such a representation as the foregoing does them a certain measure of injustice. They do not wish to deny that Christ, as the Eternal Son of God, is infallible. But the Christ who speaks in the Gospels is, they contend, "*a* Son of Man," and as such He is subject to the human infirmities of ignorance and error. "Does He not profess Himself," they ask, "in the plainest words, ignorant of the day of the last judgment? Does not His evangelist assure us that He increased in 'wisdom' as well as in stature? This being so, was not His human knowledge limited; and was not error possible, if not inevitable, when He passed beyond the limits of such knowledge as He possessed."

Let us remark in this position, first of all, the indirect admission that Christ, as the Eternal Son of God, is strictly infallible.

The Charge of Fallibility Considered.

It is of course urged that our Lord's human soul is the seat of that "fallibility" which is insisted upon as being so

fatal to His authority as a teacher. Let us then inquire what the statements of Scripture on this mysterious subject would really appear to affirm.

(*a*) When Luke tells us that our Lord increased in wisdom and stature, we can scarcely doubt that in intellectual development of some kind in Christ's human soul is indicated This development, it is implied, corresponded to the growth of His bodily frame. This progress in wisdom was real and not merely apparent, just as the growth of Christ's human body was a real growth. If only an increasing manifestation of knowledge had been meant, it might have been meant also that Christ only manifested increase of stature, while His human body did not really grow. But on the other hand, Luke had previously spoken of the child Jesus as " being filled with wisdom," and John teaches that as the Word Incarnate, Jesus was actually " full of truth." John means not only that our Lord was veracious, but that He was fully in possession of objective truth. It is clearly implied that, according to John, this fullness of truth was an element of that glory which the first disciples beheld or contemplated. This statement appears to be incompatible with the supposition that the human soul of Jesus, through spiritual contact with which the disciples " beheld " the glory of the eternal Word, was itself not " full of truth." John's narrative does not admit of our confining this " fullness of truth " to the later days of Christ's ministry, or to the period which followed His resurrection. There are then two representations before us, one suggesting a limitation of knowledge, the other a fullness of knowledge in the human soul of Christ. If we take John's account together with that of Luke, might it not seem that we have here a special instance of that tender condescension by which our Lord willed to place Himself in a relation of real sympathy with the various experiences of our finite existence ? If by an infused knowledge He was, even as a child, " full of truth," yet that He might enter with the sympathy of experience into the various conditions of our intellectual life He would seem to have acquired, by the slow labour of observation and inference, a new mastery over truths which He already, in

another sense, possessed. Such a co-existence of growth in knowledge with a possession of all its ultimate results would not be without a parrallel in ordinary human life. In moral matters, a living example may teach with a new power some law of conduct, the truth of which we have before recognised intuitively. In another field of knowledge, the telescope or the theodolite may verify a result of which we have been previously informed by a mathematical calculation.

Our Lord's Growth in Wisdom Consistent with Perfect Knowledge.

We can then readily conceive that the reality of our Lord's intellectual development would not necessarily be inconsistent with the simultaneous perfection of His knowledge. As Man, He might have received an infused knowledge of all truth, and yet have taken possession through experience and in detail of that which was latent in His mind in order to correspond with the intellectual conditions of ordinary human life. But let us suppose that this explanation be rejected, that John's statement be left out of sight, and that Luke's words be understood to imply simply that our Lord's human soul acquired knowledge which it did not in any sense possess before. Does even any such "increase in wisdom" as this during Christ's early years warrant our saying that in the days of His ministry our Lord was still ignorant of the real claims and worth of the Jewish Scriptures? Does it enable us to go further, and to maintain that when He made definite statements on the subject He was both the victim and the propagator of serious error? Surely such inferences are not less unwarranted by the statements of Scripture than they are destructive of Christ's character and authority as a teacher of truth!

His Ignorance of "That Day."

(*b*) But it may be pleaded that our Lord, in declaring His ignorance of the day of the last judgment, does positively assign a specified limit to the knowledge actually possessed by His human soul during His ministry. "Of

that day," He says, " and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father " (Mark 13. 32). " If these words," you urge, " do not refer to His ignorance as God, they must refer to His ignorance in the only other possible sense, that is to say, to His ignorance as man."

If this limitation of our Lord's human knowledge be admitted, to what does the admission lead ? It leads, properly speaking, to nothing beyond itself. It amounts to this : that at the particular time of His speaking the human soul of Christ was restricted as to its range of knowledge in one particular direction.

Constant Proofs of Superhuman Knowledge.

For it is certain from Scripture that our Lord was constantly giving proofs during His earthly life of an altogether superhuman range of knowledge. There was not merely in Him the quick and penetrating discernment of a very holy soul, not merely " that unction from the Holy One " whereby Christians instinctively " know all things " that concern their salvation. It was emphatically a knowledge of hard matters of fact, not revealed to Him by the senses, and beyond the reach of sense. Thus He knows the exact coin which will be found in the mouth of the first fish which His apostle will presently take (Matt. 17. 27). He bases His discourse on the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven on an accurate knowledge of the secret communings in which His conscience-stricken disciples had indulged on the road to Capernaum (Luke 9. 47). He gives particular instructions to the two disciples as to the finding of the ass on which He will make His entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21. 2). He is perfectly cognisant of the secret plottings of the traitor, although no human informant had disclosed them (John 13. 11). Nor is this knowledge supernaturally communicated at the moment ; it is the result of an actual supra-sensuous sight of that which He describes. " Before that Philip called thee," He says to Nathanael, " when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee " (John 1. 48). Do you compare this to the knowledge of secrets ascribed to Elisha (2 Kings 6. 9, 32), to Daniel (Dan. 2. 19), to Peter (Acts

5. 3) ? In these instances, as eminently in that of Daniel, the secret was revealed to the soul of the prophet or apostle. In the case of Christ we hear of no such revelation ; He speaks of the things of Heaven with a calm familiarity, which is natural to One who knows them as beholding them " in Himself " (John 6. 61).

The "Searcher of the Reins and Hearts."

Indeed our Lord's knowledge embraced two districts, each of which really lies open only to the eye of the Most High. We will not dwell on His knowledge of the unsuspected future, a knowledge inherent in Him, as it was imparted to those prophets in whom His Spirit had dwelt. We will not insist on His knowledge of a strictly contingent futurity, such as is involved in His positive assertion that Tyre and Sidon would have repented of their sins *if* they had enjoyed the opportunities of Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matt. 11. 21) ; although such knowledge as this, considering the vast survey of motives and circumstances which it implies, *must* be strictly proper to God alone. But He knew the secret heart of man, and He knew the hidden thought and purpose of the Most High God. Such a " discerner " was He " of the thoughts and intents " of human hearts (Heb. 4. 12), so truly did His apocalyptic title, the " Searcher of the reins and hearts," belong to Him in the days of His historical manifestation that " He needed not that any should testify to Him of men, for He knew what was in man." This was the conviction of His apostles. " We are sure," they said, " that Thou knowest all things." " Lord, Thou knowest all things," cries Peter ; " Thou knowest that I love Thee." Yet more, in the Eternal Father Jesus encounters no impenetrable mysteries, for Jesus no clouds and darkness are round about Him, nor is His way in the sea, nor His path in the deep waters, nor His footsteps unknown. On the contrary, our Lord reciprocates the Father's knowledge of Himself by an equivalent knowledge of the Father. " As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." " No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him."

An Exceptional Restriction.

Even if our Lord should be speaking in this special passage, primarily at least, of His Divine omniscience, He is also plainly speaking of a knowledge infused into and possessed by His human soul, and thus His words supply the true foil to His statement respecting the day of judgment. If that statement be construed literally, it manifestly describes, not the normal condition of His human intelligence, but an exceptional restriction. For the Gospel history implies that the knowledge infused into the human soul of Jesus was ordinarily and practically equivalent to omniscience. "We may conjecture," says Hooker, "how the powers of that soul are illuminated, which, being so inward unto God, cannot choose but be privy unto all things which God worketh, and must therefore of necessity be endued with knowledge so far forth universal, though not with infinite knowledge peculiar to Deity itself." Paul's assertion that "in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" may practically be understood of Christ's earthly life, no less than of His life of glory. If then His human intellect, flooded as it was by light streaming from His Deity, was denied at a particular time, knowledge of the date of one future event, this may be compared with that deprivation of the consolations of Deity to which His human affections and will were exposed when He hung on the Cross. If we cannot specify the motive which may have determined our Lord to deny to His human soul at one particular date the knowledge of one fact, we may presume that it belonged to that love which led Him to become "in all things like unto His brethren." That He was ever completely ignorant of aught else, or that He was ignorant on this point at any other time, are inferences for which we have no warrant and which we make at our peril.

Infallibility Does Not Imply Omniscience.

But it is not on this account alone that our Lord's human ignorance of the day of judgment, if admitted, cannot be made the premise of an argument intended to destroy His

authority when He sanctions the Mosaic authorship and historical trustworthiness of the Pentatuch. That argument involves a confusion between limitation of knowledge and liability to error ; whereas, plainly enough, a limitation of knowledge is one thing, and fallibility is another. Paul says that " we know in part," and that " we see through a glass darkly." Yet Paul is so certain of the truth of that which he teaches as to exclaim, " If we or an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Paul clearly believed in his own infallibility as a teacher of religious truth and the Church of Christ has ever since regarded his Epistles as part of an infallible literature. But it is equally clear that Paul believed his knowledge of religious truth to be limited. Infallibility does not imply omniscience any more than limited knowledge implies error. Infallibility may be conferred on a human teacher with very limited knowledge by a special endowment preserving him from error. When we say that a teacher is infallible we do not mean that his knowledge is encyclopædic, but merely that, when he does teach, he is incapable of propounding as truth that which in point of fact is not true.

Fallibility would Involve His Moral Sense.

Nor is this all. The denial of our Lord's infallibility, in the form in which it has come before us of late years, involves an unfavourable judgment, not merely of His intellectual claims, but of the penetration and delicacy of His moral sense. This is the more observable because it is fatal to a distinction which has been projected between our Lord's authority as a Teacher of spiritual or moral truth, and His authority when dealing with those questions which enter into the province of historical criticism. If in the latter sphere He is said to have been liable and subject to error ; in the former we are sometimes told His instinct was invariably unerring. But is this the case, if our Lord was really deceived in His estimate of the Book of Deuteronomy, and if further the account of the origin and composition of that book which is put forward by His censors be accepted

as satisfactory? Our Lord quotes Deuteronomy as a work of the highest authority on the subject of man's relations and duties to God. Yet we are assured that in point of fact this book was nothing better than a pious forgery of the age of Jeremiah, if indeed it was not a work of that prophet, in which he employed the name and authority of Moses as a restraint upon the increasing polytheism of the later years of King Josiah. Here it may suffice to observe that if it could have been seriously entertained it would involve our Lord in something more than intellectual fallibility. If Deuteronomy is indeed a forgery, Jesus Christ was not merely ignorant of a fact of literary history. His moral perceptions were at fault. They were not sufficiently fine to miss the consistency, the ring of truth, in a document which professed to have come from the great Lawgiver with a Divine authority; while, according to modern writers, it was only the "pious" fiction of a later age, and its falsehood had only not been admitted by its author lest its "effect" should be counteracted.

Our Lord Sets His Seal on the Writings of Moses.

Indeed, as bearing upon this vaunted distinction between spiritual truth, in which our Lord is still, it seems, to be an authority, and historical truth, in which His authority is to be set aside, we have words of His own which prove how truly He made the acceptance of the lower portions of His teaching a preliminary to belief in the higher. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" How indeed? If, when He sets the seal of His authority upon the writings of Moses as a whole, and upon the most miraculous incidents which they relate in detail, He is really only the uneducated Jew who ignorantly repeats and reflects the prejudice of a barbarous age, how shall we be sure that when He reveals the character of God, or the precepts of the new life, or the reality and nature of the endless world, He is really trustworthy—trustworthy as an authority to whom we are prepared to cling in life and in death?

His Suffering Death upon the Cross.

2. If the doctrine of Christ's Divinity implies that as a teacher of truth He is infallible, it also illuminates His suffering death upon the Cross with an extraordinary significance.

The degrees of importance which are attributed to the several events and stages of our Lord's life on earth will naturally vary with the variations of belief respecting His Person. With the humanitarian, for instance, the dominant, almost the exclusive, interest will be found to centre in Christ's ministry, as affording the largest illustrations of His human character and of His moral teaching. The mysteries which surround His entrance into and His departure from our human world will have been thrown into the background as belonging to questions of a very inferior degree of importance, or possibly as at best serving to illustrate the legendary creativeness of a subsequent age. Perhaps a certain historical and chronological value will still be allowed to attach to Christ's birth. Perhaps, if His resurrection be admitted to have been a matter of historical occurrence, a high evidential significance will continue to be assigned to it, such as was recognised by Priestly and by all Socinians of the last generation. And to a humanitarian, the interests of Christ's death will be of a yet higher kind. For Christ's death enters into His moral self-manifestation ; it is the heroic climax of His devotion to truth ; it is the surest seal which a teacher can set upon his doctrine. Thus a humanitarian will admit that the dying Christ saves the world by enriching its stock of moral life by setting before the eyes of men for all future time the example of a transcendent sacrifice of self. But in the bare fact that Jesus died, humanitarianism sees no mystery beyond that which attaches to the death of any ordinary man. The crucifixion is simply regarded as a practical appendix to the Sermon on the Mount. And thus to the Socinian pilgrim the mountain of the beautitudes and the shores of the Sea of Galilee will always and naturally appear more worthy of reverence and attention than the spot on which Mary brought her Son into the world, or than the hill on which Jesus died.

Far otherwise must it ever be with a sincere believer in our Saviour's Godhead.

He Who Died Truly God.

When He who is born, who suffers, who dies, who rises and ascends, is known to be personally and literally God it is inevitable that the interest of thought and devotion should take a direction in which the " mystery of godliness " is most directly and urgently felt. Christian devotion necessarily hovers around those critical turning-points in the self-manifestation of the infinite and Almighty Being, at which His gracious and immeasurable self-humiliation most powerfully illustrates His boundless love by the contrast which it yields to the majesty of His Divine and Eternal Person.

Nowhere is the illuminative force of Christ's Divinity more felt than here. The tremendous premise, that He who died upon the Cross is truly God, when seriously and firmly believed, avails to carry the believer forward to any representation of the efficacy of His death which rests upon an adequate authority.

If Only Man His Death Insufficient.

" No person," says Hooker, " was born of the virgin but the Son of God, no person but the Son of God baptised, the Son of God condemned, the Son of God and no other person crucified ; which one only point of Christian belief, *the infinite worth of the Son of God*, is the very ground of all things believed concerning life and salvation by that which Christ either did or suffered as man in our behalf." " That," says Bishop Andrewes, " which setteth the high price upon this sacrifice is this, that He which offereth it to God, is God." " Marvel not," says Cyril of Jerusalem, " if the whole world has been redeemed, for He who has died for us is no mere man, but the only begotten Son of God." " Christ," says Cyril of Alexandria, " would not have been equivalent (as a sacrifice) for the whole creation, nor would He have suffered to redeem the world, nor have laid down His life by way of a price for it, and poured forth for us His precious blood if He be not really the Son, and God of God, but a creature."

This, as has been already noticed, is Peter's meaning when he says that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and immaculate. This underlies Paul's contrast between the blood of bulls and goats and the blood of Christ offering Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9. 13, 15) This is the substance of John's announcement that the Blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1. 7). Apart from this illuminating doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus Christ crucified, how overstrained and exaggerated are the New Testament representations of the effects of His death ! If Jesus be not God, we stand face to face in the New Testament, not with the unsearchable riches, the boundless mercy of a Divine Saviour, able " to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him," but only with the crude and clinging prejudices of His uneducated or semi-educated followers. But if it be certain that " in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him," then the disclosures of revelation respecting the efficacy of His death do not appear to be excessive. Vast as is the conclusion of a world of sinners redeemed, atoned for, reconciled, the premise that Jesus crucified is truly God more than warrants it.

His Priestly Office.

3. It is unnecessary for us to dwell more at length upon the light which our Lord's Divinity sheds upon His priestly office. It is His Divinity which makes His intercession in Heaven so omnipotent a force. He intercedes above by His very presence ; He does not bend as a suppliant before the sanctity of God ; He is a Priest upon His Throne (Zech. 6. 13). Nor may we linger over the bearings of His Divinity upon His kingly office. The fact that He rules with a boundless power may assure us that, whether willingly or by constraint, yet assuredly in the end all moral beings shall be put under Him. But you do not question the legitimacy of this obvious inference. And time forbids us to linger upon the topic, suggestive and interesting as it is. We pass then

to consider an objection which will have been taking shape in many minds during the course of the preceding discussion.

IS A DIVINE EXAMPLE IMITABLE?

III. You admit that the doctrine of Christ's Godhead illuminates the force of other doctrines in the Christian creed. But you have the interests of morality at heart. A model being, the conditions of whose existence are absolutely distinct from the conditions which surround his imitators, will be deemed to be beyond the reach of any serious imitation. A merely human saviour would at least be imitable, and he would thus better respond to the immediate moral necessities of man.

1. Now this objection is of an essentially *á priori* character. It contends that, if Christ is God, His Manhood must be out of the reach of human imitation. It does not deny the fact that He has been most closely imitated by those who have believed most entirely in His true Divinity. In fact it seems to leave out of sight two very pertinent considerations.

His Human Nature our Example.

(*a*) The objector appears to forget, on the one hand, that according to the terms of the Catholic doctrine, our Lord is truly and literally Man, and that it is His human nature which is proposed to our imitation. His Divinity does not destroy the reality of His Manhood by overshadowing or absorbing it. Certainly the Divine attributes of Jesus are beyond our imitation; we can but adore a boundless intelligence or a resistless will. But the province of the imitable in the life of Jesus is not indistinctly traced.

The Sufficiency of Christ in Us.

(*b*) Nor, on the other hand, may it be forgotten that if we can thus copy our Lord, it is not in the strength of our fallen nature. Our nature left to itself, enfeebled and depraved, cannot realize the ideal of which it is a wreck, until a higher power has entered into it, and made it what of itself it cannot be. Therefore the power of imitating Jesus comes from Jesus through His Spirit, His grace, His presence. Now, as in Paul's day, "Jesus Christ is in us"

Christians, " except we be reprobates." The " power that worketh in us " is no mere memory of a distant past. But if the Christ whom we imitate be truly human, the Christ who thus creates and fertilises moral power within us must be Divine.

The Doctrine in the Sphere of Morals.

2. Indeed, it is precisely this belief in the Divinity of our Lord which has enriched human life with moral virtues such as civilised paganism could scarcely have appreciated, and which it certainly could not have created. The fruitfulness of this great doctrine in the sphere of morals will be more immediately apparent if we consider one or two samples of its productiveness.

(*a*) When Greek thought was keenest, and Greek art most triumphantly creative, and Greek political life so organised as to favour in a degree elsewhere unknown among men the play of man's highest natural energies, Greek society was penetrated through and through by an invisible enemy, more fatal in its ravages to thought, to art, to freedom, than the sword of any Persian or Macedonian foe. And already, in the age of the early Cæsars, Rome carried in her bosom the secret of her impending decline and fall in the coming centuries. Christian moralists detected and exposed it in terms which are fully borne out by writers devoted to the old pagan society. The life-blood of a race may be drained away less nobly than on the battlefield. Nor did religion herself, in her pagan guise, supply the needed element of resistance and cure. Her mysteries were the sanction, her temples the scene, her priests the ministers of the grossest debaucheries : and the misery of a degraded society might have seemed to be complete when the institutions which were designed to shed some rays of light and love from a higher sphere upon the woes and brutalities of this lower world did but consecrate and augment the thick moral darkness which made of earth a very Hell.

How Has Jesus Made Men Pure?

Now that Jesus Christ has breasted this evil is a matter of historical fact. And how has Jesus made men pure ? Did He insist upon prudential and hygienic considerations ?

Did He prove that the laws of the physical world cannot be strained or broken with physical impunity? No! For, at least, He knew human nature well, and experience does not justify the anticipation that scientific demonstrations of the physical consequences of sensual indulgence will be equal to the task of checking the surging impetuosity of passion. Did Christ, then, call men to purity only by the beauty of His own example? Did He only confront them with a living ideal of purity, so bright and beautiful as to shame them into hatred of animal degradation? Again I say Jesus Christ knew human nature well. If He had only offered an example of perfect purity He would but have repeated the work of the ancient law; He would have given us an ideal without the capacity of realising it; He would have at best created a torturing sense of shortcoming and pollution, stimulated by the vision of an unattainable standard of perfection. Therefore He did not merely afford us in a human form a faultless example of chaste humanity. He did more. He did that which He could only do as being in truth the Almighty God. He made Himself one with our human nature, that He might heal and bless it through its contact with His Divinity. He folded it around His eternal Person; He made it His own; He made it a power which could quicken and restore us. And then, by the gift of His Spirit, He bound us to it; He bound us through it to Himself, nay, He robed us in it; by it He entered into us, and made our members His own. Henceforth, then, the tabernacle of God is with men; and "*corpus regenerati fit caro Crucifixi.*"* Henceforth Christian humanity is to be conscious of a presence within it before which the unclean spirit cannot choose but shrink away discomfited and shamed. The apostle's argument to the Corinthian Christians expresses the language of the Christian conscience in presence of impure temptations to the end of time. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot? God forbid." Such motives are strong and effective when our faith in a

* "The body of a regenerate man becomes the flesh of the Crucified One."

Divine Christ is strong ; they are weak when our faith in His Divinity is weak ; they vanish from our moral life, and leave us a prey to our enemy when the Godhead of Jesus is explicitly denied, and when the language which asserts the true incorporation of an Almighty Saviour with our frail humanity is resolved into the fantastic drapery of an empty metaphor.

The Pride of Pagan Civilisation.

(*b*) If the civilised pagan was impure, he was also proud and self-asserting. He was utterly unable to see intrinsic evil in pride, and it penetrated in a subtle but intense form into the heart of those better ethical systems which, like the later Stoicism, appeared most nearly to rival the moral glories of the Gospel. Pride indeed might seem to have been the misery of paganism rather than its fault. For man cannot detach himself from himself. Paganism was not humble, because to paganism the true God was but a name. The whole life and thought of the pagan world was therefore very naturally based upon pride. Its literature, its governments, its religious institutions, its social organisation and hierarchy, its doctrines about human life and duty —all alike were based on the principle of a boundless self-assertion. They were based on that cruel and brutal principle which in the end hands over to the keenest wit and to the strongest arm the sceptre of a tyranny that knows no bounds, save those of its strongest lust, checked and controlled by the most lively apprehensions of its selfish foresight. Now how did Jesus Christ confront this power of pride thus dominant in the old pagan world ? By precept ? Undoubtedly. " The kings of the Gentiles," He said to His followers, " exercise lordship over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so " (Luke 22. 25). " Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased ; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted " (Luke 14. 11). By example ? Let us listen to Him. " Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls " (Matt. 11. 29). " If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought to wash one another's feet " (John 13. 14).

Why His Example so Powerful?

But *why* was His example so cogent? What was it in Jesus Christ which revealed to man the moral beauty and the moral power of the humiliation of self? Was it that being a Man, who had within His grasp the prizes which are at the command of genius, or the state and luxuries which may be bought by wealth, He put these things from Him? If He was only Man, did He really forego wealth and station? Were they ever—at least on a great scale—within His reach? Even if it be thought that they were, was His renunciation of them a measure of "that mind which is in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 5), to which Paul directs the gaze of the practical Christian? Paul, as we have seen, meant something far higher than the refusal of any earthly greatness when he drew attention to the self-renunciation of his Lord and Master. "Being in the form of God, . . . He emptied Himself, and took on Him the form of a slave" (Phil. 2. 6, 7). It has been true from the first, it is true at this hour, that a sincere faith which recognises in the Son of Mary, laid in His manger and nailed to His Cross, none other than the only begotten Son of God, is the strongest incentive to conquer the natural pride of the human heart, and to learn the bearing of a little child (Matt. 18. 3)—that true note of predestined nobility—in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Heathenism Unloving.

(*c*) Let us take one more illustration of the moral fruitfulness of a faith in the Divinity of our Saviour. There is a grace, to which the world itself does homage, and which those who bend neither heart nor knee before the world's Redeemer admit to be the consequence of His appearance among men.

Heathenism, as being impure and proud, was consistently unloving. For as the one vice eats out the delicacy and heart of all true tenderness, so the other systematically enthrones self upon the ruins of the unselfish affections. Despite the Utopian sketches which have been drawn by the philosophers of the last century, the sentiment of "humanity" is too feeble a thing to create in us a true love

of man as man. Man does not, in his natural state, love his brother man, except it be from motives of interest or blood-relationship. Nay, man regards all who are not thus related to him as forming the great company of his natural rivals and enemies, from whom he has nothing to expect save that which the might or the prudence of self-interest may dictate.

Man's highest love is the love of self, varied by those subordinate affections which minister self-love, and society is an agglomeration of self-loving beings, whose ruling instincts are shaped by force or by prudence into a political whole, but who are ever ready, as opportunity may arise, to break forth into the excesses of an unchecked barbarism. Contempt for and cruelty towards the slave, hatred of the political or literary rival, suspicious aversion for the foreigner, disbelief in the reality of human virtue and of human disinterestedness, were recognised ingredients in the temper of pagan times. The science of life consisted in solving a practical equation between the measure of evil which it was desirable to inflict upon others, and the amount of suffering which it might be necessary to endure at their hands. Love of mankind would have seemed folly to a society, the recognised law of whose life was selfishness, and whose vices culminated in a mutual hatred between man and man, class and class, race and race, thinly veiled by the hollow conventionalisms which distinguish pagan civilisation from pure barbarism.

Christ and Social Corruption.

How did Jesus Christ reform this social corruption? He gave the new commandment. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." But was His love merely the love of a holy man for those whose hearts were too dull and earthly to love Him in return? Could such a human love as this have availed to compass a moral revolution, and to change the deepest instincts of mankind? Is it not a fact that Christians have measured the love of Jesus Christ as man measures all love, by observing the degree in which it involves the gift of self? Love is ever the gift of self. It gives that which costs us

something, or it is not love. Its spirit may vary in the degree of intensity, but it is ever the same. It is always and everywhere the sacrifice of self. It is the gift of time, or of labour, or of income, or of affection ; it is the surrender of reputation and of honour ; it is the acceptance of sorrow and of pain for others. The warmth of the spirit of love varies with the felt greatness of the sacrifice which expresses it and which is its life. Therefore the love of the Divine Christ is infinite. " He loved me," says an apostle, " and gave Himself for me." He who is crucified between two thieves is nevertheless the Lord of Glory. From this faith in the voluntary self-immolation of the Most Holy a new power of love has streamed forth into the soul of man.

Impoverishing or Elevating?

It is therefore an error to suppose that the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity has impoverished the moral life of Christendom " by removing Christ from the category of imitable beings." For on the one hand, the doctrine leaves His humanity altogether intact ; on the other it enhances the force of His example as a model of the graces of humility and love. Thus from age to age this doctrine has in truth fertilised the moral soil of human life, not less than it has guarded and illuminated intellectual truth. How indeed could it be otherwise ? " If God spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ? "

The Most Vital of All Questions.

The question of Christ's Divinity is the question of the truth or falsehood of Christianity. " If Christ be not God," it has been truly said, " He is not so great as Mohammed." But Christ's moral relation to Mohammed may safely be left to every unsophisticated conscience, and if the conscience owns in Him the moral Chief of humanity, it must take Him at His word when He unveils before it His superhuman glory.

But here we must close this attempt to reassert, against some misapprehensions of modern thought, the great truth which guards the honour of Christ, and which is the most

precious feature in the intellectual heritage of Christians. The Divine Christ of the Gospel and the Church is no mere actor, though He were the greatest, in the great tragedy of human history; He belongs not exclusively or especially to the past; He is

"The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

He is at this moment all that He was eighteen centuries ago, all that He has been to our fathers, all that He will be to our children. He is the Divine and infallible Teacher, the Healer and Pardoner of sin, the Source of all graces, the Conqueror of Satan and of death—now, as of old, and as in years to come. Now as heretofore He is "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him;" now as on the day of His triumph over death, "He opens the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers;" now as in the first age of the Church He it is "that hath the key of David, that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." He is ever the same; but, as the children of time, whether for good or evil, we move onwards in perpetual change. The hours of life pass, they do not return; they pass, yet they are not forgotten. But the present is our own; we may resolve, if we will, to live as men who live for the glory of an Incarnate God. Brethren, you shall not repent it, if when life's burdens press heavily, and especially at that solemn hour, when human help must fail, you are able to lean with strong confidence on the arm of an Almighty Saviour. May He in deed and truth be with you, alike in your pilgrimage through this world, and when that brief journey is drawing to its close! May you, sustained by His presence and aid, so pass through the valley of the shadow of death as to fear no evil, and to find, at the gate of the eternal world, that all the yearnings of faith and hope are to be more than satisfied by the vision of the Divine "King in His beauty!"

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"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise

GOD OUR SAVIOUR

be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

AMEN."

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